

THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE OF BRITAIN



BOOK IV 1815-1919



21

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THE STORY OF THE
PEOPLE OF BRITAIN

BOOK IV

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THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE OF BRITAIN

BOOK IV

1815—1919

BY

LUCY HANSON

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PREFACE

IN the preface to the third volume of this series, reasons were given for dealing with the history of the last two hundred years at greater length than is usual in elementary text-books. It was pointed out that the events and changes of this period are more easily intelligible to a modern child than those of medieval times can possibly be ; and it was stated as the writer's belief that young people may profit much by trying to understand how our present state of society has grown out of that which came immediately before it. To know something of the striking incidents and general conditions of life in the Middle Ages is valuable and interesting to children ; but they can hardly be expected to trace the connection between the institutions of that time and those which they see in their native country to-day.

If this applies in general to the whole period after 1689, it applies more particularly to the nineteenth century. Great Britain as we know her may be said to have come gradually into existence since the end of the Napoleonic wars, while many of the conditions which determine her place in the world have developed even more recently. Most people now feel the necessity of understanding

more clearly the history of modern Europe and our own connection with it. A first step towards such understanding will be to give greater attention to the main facts in the history of modern England.

L. H.

May 1917

NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

IN this book, as in the preceding volumes of the series, it has been thought well to include illustrations from contemporary sources. Comparison of what was with what is to-day suggests the rapidity, as well as the importance, of some of the changes which occurred during the period covered by the book. Portraits of men distinguished in science and art are included as well as those of leaders in military, political, and social movements.

NOTE ON THE SECOND EDITION

IN this edition the opportunity has been taken to include a summary of the chief events from the outbreak of war in August 1914 to the signing of the peace treaty in June 1919.

S. C. R.

October 1920

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INTRODUCTION

THE nineteenth century was a period of most wonderful growth and change in Great Britain, a time during which it became the country we ourselves know. At its beginning, people were still living in what we should call the old world. They had no railways, but travelled in stage-coaches, in post-chaises, or on horseback. They had no telegraph, or telephone, no steamships. It took many weeks to reach America, months to reach India, half a year to get to Australia. The result was that the new countries of the world were hardly opened up at all, and that trade with the old countries in the East, India and China, was left to a small number of people. At home, the greater part of the nation still lived in villages and on farms, eating, drinking and wearing what was produced in their own country. Our manufacturing towns, such as Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham, were small places, and round London there were still miles of fields and lanes where now nothing is to be seen except houses and streets. Few people knew much of what went on in any other part of the world than their own, and if they did know they heard it only a very long time after it had taken place.

Again, many things which we look upon as the most ordinary arrangements of life did not then exist at all. There was no gas to light the houses, no such thing as a

lucifer match to start a fire or put a light to a candle. The streets were badly paved, and not too safe at night, because of the darkness, and there were no regular policemen. In both town and country the water was bad and often scarce, and drainage was neglected. Fevers and small-pox were common, and killed great numbers of children. Poor people, as a rule, were very ignorantly treated by the doctors, and even the rich could



The "Comet" stage coach

(In Piccadilly. From a contemporary print)

seldom find any really skilful surgeons or physicians. For children of the working-class there were few schools; boys and girls of six or eight years were often sent out to work, and most of them grew up without being able to read or write. Their fathers had no voice in choosing members of Parliament, and at election times could do nothing but look on while the gentry settled everything amongst themselves.

This was the state of things only a hundred years ago ; and if we compare it with what we see about us now, we shall understand that our country has altered more during this century than in any other similar period of time. During a hundred years three generations grow up to middle age, so the grandparents of men and women who are now about forty were born into the old world we have just been describing. But now our



Mile End

(At the beginning of the nineteenth century)

country is so covered with railways that we can get to almost any part of it in a day ; steamships will take us to America in less than a week, and to the most distant parts of the world in six weeks. A friend in India can hear from us within a few hours by cable, and a business man in London can talk quite easily on the telephone to another in Edinburgh, or even in Paris, and recognise his voice. Articles produced in all the different Continents come as a matter of course to the shops and

houses in Great Britain; mutton from Australia, tea from India or China, bananas from the West Indies are amongst our people's most ordinary purchases. Through the power of electricity we are carried at a great speed underground to all parts of the immense city of London, which has more people in it than has the whole of Belgium. The same force gives light for a room or a street at the touch of a switch. Wonderful discoveries have made it



Westminster Bridge

(Note at the right of the picture the Houses of Parliament in course of erection)

possible for carriages to run by themselves and machines to fly in the air. Others have immensely lessened the pains that sick people must bear, and freed our own nation altogether from many dreadful diseases. Every working-man can have comforts and conveniences which no one dreamed of a hundred years ago. He gives his vote, moreover, for some one to represent him in Parliament, and so has a full right to an opinion as to what is going

on. His children need not grow up ignorant, and, indeed, are not allowed to do so. Every one is able to read the news of the whole world which pours in upon us, and is spread by hundreds of newspapers.

Some short account of the way in which these changes came about must be the chief part of the history of the nineteenth century. Of course there have been many other events—wars, and revolutions in foreign countries, and in our own possessions as well. But the main threads of interest are the increase in man's knowledge of nature, and in his power over it; the transformation of ordinary life which resulted from this; and the setting up of the system by which practically every man in the country has, at any rate, a small share in deciding how public affairs shall be carried on.

I. GREAT BRITAIN AFTER THE NAPOLEONIC WAR

IN dealing with the history of a particular century it is not often possible to begin exactly at its first year and stop exactly at its last. If we are to make a connected story of it, we must often include a little of the century before, or of the century after, because these years appear to belong naturally to the period with which we are concerned. Thus, for example, it seems reasonable to start the history of the eighteenth century with the Revolution of 1689, because that event was the real beginning of the power of Parliament over the King, and this power went on growing all through the eighteenth century and afterwards. In the same way the true history of the nineteenth

century can hardly be said to begin until after the end of the Napoleonic War. Until this was over, no great changes at home could take place. There was neither time to think of them nor money to make them. In 1815 the battle of Waterloo put an end for ever to the power of Napoleon Bonaparte. It saved Europe from his tyranny and our own country from the danger of attack. Then our forefathers had leisure for looking about them to see what the war had cost and what state of things it had left behind.

The National Debt

One result which everybody noticed was the immense growth of what is known as the National Debt. This simply means that the government borrows money from people who can lend it, and pays them so much of what is called interest, usually about three pounds a year on every hundred pounds, for the use of it. It is a very good arrangement on the whole, because it gives the government some of the money needed for the army and navy and other purposes, and at the same time provides people who have money to spare with a perfectly safe way of making an income out of it. You do not make so much by investing in Consols, which means lending to the government, as you do out of investing in some other things, such as trading companies. But you can be absolutely certain that the interest will be paid quite regularly, and that your money will never be lost.

Still, it must be remembered that the money for paying this interest on the National Debt has to be raised by taxes on the people. There is no other way for a government to get money except by taxation; so if it

spends a great deal on war, or Old Age Pensions, or schools, or anything else, the nation has to pay either at once, or else year after year, in interest on the National Debt. If the money has been spent on something which makes people happier or healthier or better educated, they do not notice the increased taxes so much. If it has been spent on a war, however, though this may have been absolutely necessary, there is often nothing in the way of greater prosperity to show for it at the end, and so the expense is felt very much more. In any case, it is important to arrange the taxes so that they interfere as little as possible with trade and farming and manufactures, and do not press too hardly on people who cannot afford to pay. At the beginning of the nineteenth century this was not well understood, and the result was that the working-people of Great Britain suffered even greater hardships than they need have done.

State of the Working-People

All through the Napoleonic War what is known as the Industrial Revolution was going on; and this meant, as we know already, that large factories were taking the place of small workshops, that machines and steam were being used instead of hand-work, and that much larger quantities of goods were being turned out. Our country was the only one in which these changes were taking place just then, and the result was that the manufacturers and mill-owners were able to make a great deal of money. They sold these goods to foreign nations as well as to the people at home, who, in spite of everything, were increasing in number very fast. The landlords and farmers also made money during the war. There were

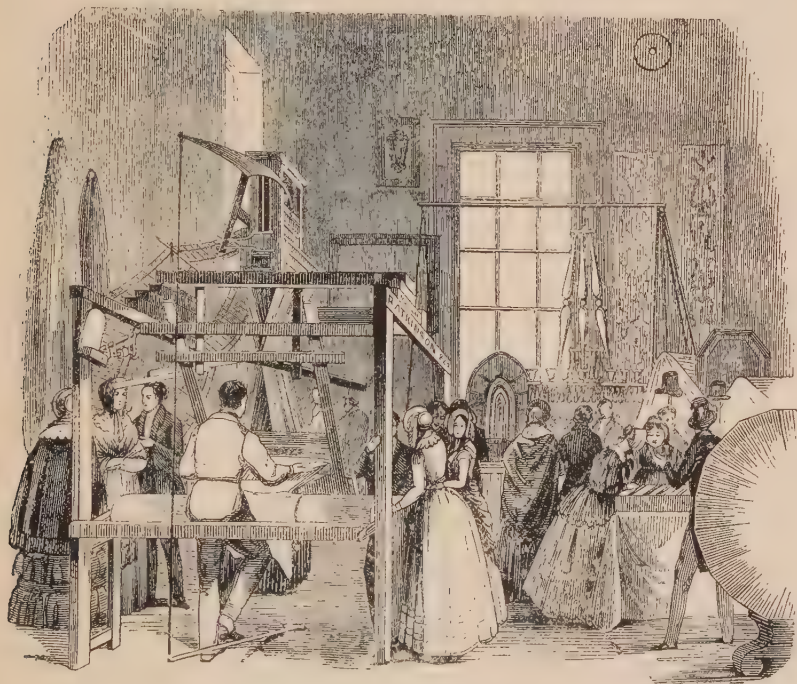
more people to feed from the produce of the land, and no corn was allowed to come in from abroad. This meant that the price of it rose very high at home ; the farmers were able to pay increased rents and yet keep a great deal of profit for themselves.

But neither the work-people in the towns nor the labourers in the country gained anything out of this increase in wealth. The rich lent money to the government to carry on the war, while the poor had to take a large share in paying the interest on it. Wages did not rise as rents and profits did, and yet working-people had to pay the higher prices for food which were the result of the war. Thus the quartern loaf, for which we ordinarily pay about sixpence, cost one and tenpence, and butter was two shillings a pound. Meat was so dear that many people had to eat shell-fish instead ; and salt was a luxury because a tax of fifteen shillings had to be paid on every bushel of it.

While the fighting was actually going on, the poor did not complain very much of this. For one thing they thought it probably could not be helped, and that they ought to do their best for the country at such a time instead of making trouble ; and secondly, they naturally hoped that when peace was made, everything would be much better. But, as a matter of fact, the years from 1815 to 1820 were the most miserable of all, and this was when the poor people began to be angry and to riot because nothing was done to help them.

We cannot be surprised at this when we read of the state of things at that time both in town and country. In the manufacturing districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, where now the mill-hands are well off, a workman then earned perhaps ten shillings a week. For this he

worked most likely twelve hours a day. His house was a wretched little hovel, for even if he could have afforded to pay a good rent there were no good houses to be had. People had hurried to these manufacturing towns much faster than cottages could be built to receive them, and



A loom for weaving poplin

(It was exhibited at the meeting of the British Association held at Cork in 1843)

the result was that families were crowded together in darkness and dirt, sleeping and eating all in the same room. A man's wretched wages would hardly buy food for his wife and children, and the result was that they, also, had to go out to work.

This labour of children was one of the very worst parts of the factory system in its early days. As machinery was improved, particularly that for spinning and weaving cotton, people discovered that there were many things which could be done even by quite little boys and girls of six years old. They used to watch the machines, join the thread if it broke, and help the spinners and weavers in various ways. There was no law to prevent a child, however young, from being employed, and even though he earned only a penny a day for twelve hours' work, it seemed better to let him do that than go without the bread his penny would buy. So children were sent off to the factory very soon after they were old enough to run about alone. At first numbers of very poor ones, usually orphans, were sent to the North from London. But after a time the workmen thought that if any children had to do this work, it had better be their own. So a little boy would have to wake up very early in the morning and go off with his father to the factory ; there he would work all day in the hot stifling air, with only a little time off for what meals his mother could give him, and with no time at all for play. In the evening he would come home too tired for anything except to fall asleep in the crowded little room amongst his brothers and sisters.

A poem called *The Cry of the Children* was written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who intended to make people understand the evils of factory labour for young children. These are a few verses from it :

Do you hear the children weeping, O my brothers,

Ere the sorrow comes with years ?

They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,—

And *that* cannot stop their tears.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly !—
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

“For oh,” say the children, “we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap—
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping—
We fall upon our faces, trying to go :
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flowers would look as pale as snow.
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring
Through the coal-dark underground—
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

“For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,—
Their wind comes in our faces,—
Till our hearts turn,—our heads, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places—
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling—
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall—
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling—
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.—
And all day the iron wheels are droning ;
And sometimes we could pray,
‘O ye wheels’ (breaking out in a mad moaning)
‘Stop ! be silent for to-day !’”

And well may the children weep before you !
They are weary before they run ;

They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun :
They know the grief of man, without his wisdom ;
They sink in man's despair, without his calm—
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—
Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly
The blessing of its memory cannot keep,—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly :
Let them weep ! let them weep !

In the country districts, also, children were sent to work when they were only five or six years old, and although this was not nearly so unhealthy for them as the factory work, it was very hard all the same. They used to be kept all day scaring birds away from the growing crops, or gleaning in the harvest-fields, or helping to dig potatoes during the autumn. Of course they learned nothing except farm work, and had very little chance of doing anything when they grew up but just what their fathers had done. And at the same time they were so poorly fed that they could not be so strong as boys and girls ought to be. A labourer's wages were only a few shillings a week, and with bread and everything else very dear he could afford little indeed for his family.

There were other causes as well which made the state of things very bad amongst cottagers and farm labourers. What was called the "enclosure" of farms had been going on for forty or fifty years, and still continued. In the nineteenth century, just as in the eighteenth, much of what was included under the name enclosure was good, but there were other things about it which were very bad. When it meant that compact farms took the place of straggling open fields, there was nothing to be

said against it. Even when it meant that small holdings were swallowed up by larger ones, there were great advantages in having rich men able to spend money freely on their land, though it was a pity for many small farmers to be squeezed out. But when enclosure meant that land-owners took for themselves the open commons where poor people had for centuries been able to feed their cows and pigs and geese, then the result was a great deal of poverty and hardship in every village where it took place. In the year 1801, the traveller Arthur Young had written a book about this, giving the results of what he saw in travelling over England. In only about a quarter of the parishes where commons had been enclosed was there any proper plan for making up the loss to the cottagers; and over and over again Young writes of the poorer people in a village: "Many who used to keep cows have not done so since." Most likely there were other things besides cows which the labourers could not keep after they lost their common land, but to be without a good supply of milk was one of their greatest hardships, especially when there were many children to feed.

These Enclosure Acts, as we have seen, were not, as a rule, intended to be selfish, and very often the harm they did was caused by carelessness and bad management. And there was another law in operation just at this time which had actually been made out of kindness and a wish to help the poor, but yet it did them more harm than almost any other condition of their life. This was the Poor Law, usually called "The Old Poor Law," which had been passed in 1796.

It first arose out of the concern of some Justices of the Peace in a country parish at the low wages earned by the labourers in winter. There is, of course, always

much less farm work to be done at that season than at any other, but, in former times, men had earned money during the winter by threshing corn with hand flails. When machinery had been invented to do this much more quickly, most of the labourers had to go without both the work and the pay. So the Justices thought it would be a kind thing to make up the winter wages to a sum on which a family could live, the money to be obtained from the parish rates. This idea seemed at first to be harmless and charitable, and nobody guessed what results it would have.

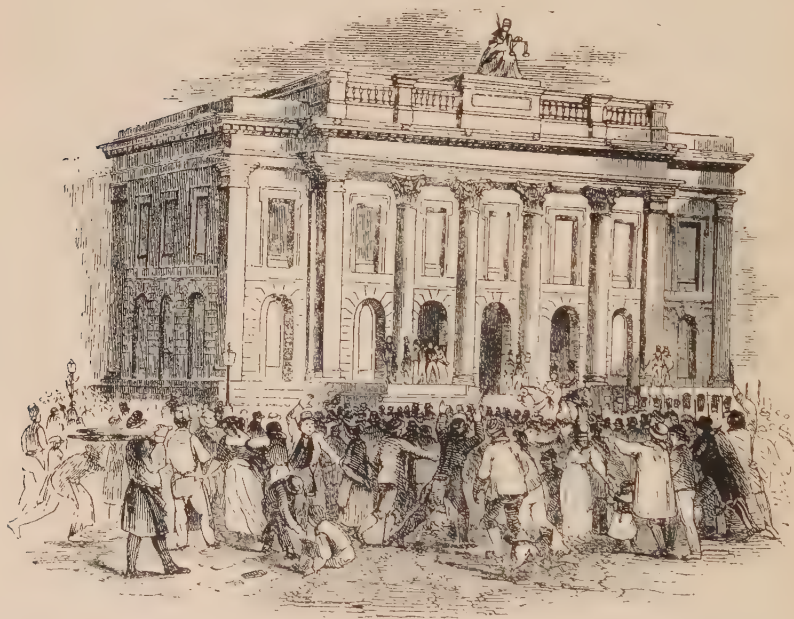
But, in the first place, idle people saw very soon that if the parish was always going to make up their winter wages to a certain amount, it did not matter how little they earned themselves; and then they saw that it did not matter if they earned nothing at all. Again, the plan could not possibly stop short at winter wages. If a man declared that he was earning little or nothing, there could not be any reason for letting his family go short of food in summer any more than in winter. Then, in the second place, the farmer who employed the labourers saw his advantage in the Poor Law too. He would very often pay even the most industrious and hard-working men so little that they had to go to the parish for relief, because it was cheaper to do this than to give a fair wage at once. A parish rate is a sort of tax paid by everybody except the poor of the parish; so, although the farmers had to pay some of it themselves, they shared it with the squire, the clergyman, the shopkeepers and anybody else who happened to be living in their parish. They simply paid half-wages while other people joined in making up the rest. So the general results were that idlers had nearly as much money as workers, that the taking of parish relief

became a matter of course instead of a thing to avoid, and that rich farmers grew richer still at the expense of their neighbours. At the same time the labourers themselves were poor and miserable on the small doles they got, and many of the best of them were growing thoroughly discontented. We cannot nowadays help wondering that this system was allowed to go on as long as it did; for when, later, the government really began to inquire into it, they found numbers of sensible people who knew perfectly well what grave harm was being done.

Besides all these causes of misery in the country districts—the Poor Law, the Enclosures, the high price of food—there was another which suddenly arose after the battle of Waterloo and the general peace in Europe, namely, the release of great numbers of men from the army, the navy and the militia. It is said that one man out of every six had been in one of these forces during the Napoleonic wars. Some, of course, remained in the regular service, but very many were discharged, and the militia, which had been intended for the defence of Great Britain only, did not need to remain under arms at all. Most of these men came from country districts and went back to them, with the result that there were far more people to feed, and that bread became dearer than ever. We can well understand that this trouble, added to all the rest, must have seemed very hard to bear. All over the country people had been looking forward to the end of the war as a time when things would improve. Instead of that they were made worse, and there appeared to be no hope that the government either would, or could, do anything to help.

The labourers had no good way of showing their discontent, and so the more violent of them took to destroying

farm-buildings, and burning hay-ricks, and doing other wrong and useless things of the same kind. In the towns, too, there were riots ; for many factory hands were thrown out of work by the peace, owing to the sudden stoppage in the demand for army and navy clothes, boots and weapons. Near Manchester a worse disturbance took



Reading the Riot Act before the Town Hall, Manchester

place than anywhere else. A meeting was being held in a field outside the town, and the magistrates, thinking it mischievous, made the mistake of sending for soldiers. Some people in the crowd were killed, and this affair was long remembered with great resentment as "the Peterloo Massacre." Shortly afterwards severe laws were passed,

called the Six Acts, which were intended to prevent conspiracies of all kinds, and even at discouraging any open complaints. People were forbidden not only to keep weapons and to drill for any rebellious purpose, but also to hold large meetings for the discussion of their grievances. Then a stamp tax was imposed upon all small pamphlets, which made it expensive to bring them out, and as the same thing existed already for newspapers, it was difficult to publish very much for poorer people to read.

All this probably seemed wise to the authorities at the time, because they were still afraid of the ideas about freedom and equality which had been spread at the time of the French Revolution. But it must have struck working-people as very unjust, all the more because it was only the few who were at all inclined to violence, while most of them endured their misery very patiently. There were some men outside the working-class, however, who did not approve of the state of things and wished to alter it, even although the Cabinet Ministers and members of Parliament appeared pretty well satisfied.

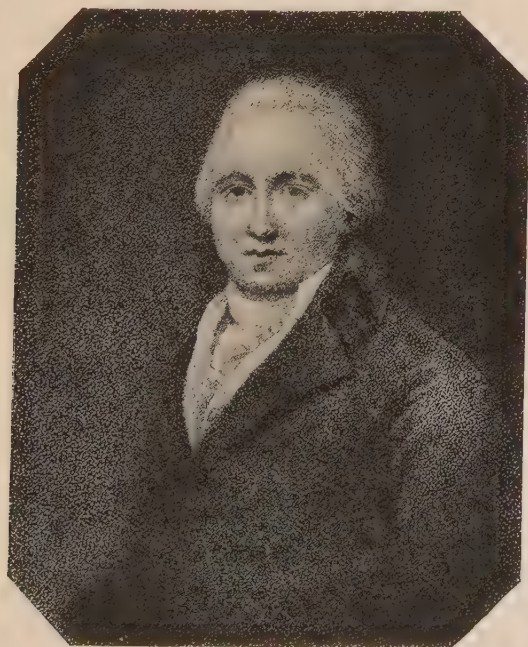
One of these men was William Cobbett, who started a paper called *The Weekly Political Register*. This was first published at the price of a shilling and a half-penny, but in 1816 it began to appear at twopence a copy. This brought it within the reach of all the more prosperous workmen, and, as Cobbett was a good writer and discussed their affairs with a great deal of knowledge, he had a widespread influence upon them. It was probably Cobbett's writing which brought most of the more thoughtful artisans to see that the real change needed was in the government of the country. If the middle and working classes could have a fair share in electing

members of Parliament, and so in deciding what laws should be passed, they would almost certainly be able to do something to help themselves and each other. The landed gentry and rich manufacturers, who had Parliament practically in their own hands, did not understand the state of things amongst the poor. The spread among working-men of this idea of the reform of the electoral system had its effect at the time in helping to stop the rioting and machinery-breaking, and it had greater effects afterwards.

Other Classes of People

We must not suppose, however, that all the richer people in Great Britain had deliberately made up their minds to prosper and enjoy themselves at the expense of their less fortunate countrymen. Some of the arrangements which we now see needed altering had grown up gradually from old days, and when this is the case, people are often inclined to think that it is hardly possible they should be different. Since working-men had never had votes for Parliament, it required more thought than most people gave to the matter to see why they should have them. With regard to the bad side of the factory system, and to the increasing poverty of the country labourers, it was rather the other way round. The growth of manufactures and of the population, which brought both these evils with them, had come about rapidly and at a time when the country was much occupied with other things. Factories were at work and children were labouring in them before anybody had reflected much upon the proper way of meeting the difficulties caused by the industrial revolution. The law-makers of that time,

in fact, were much too ready to be contented with any arrangement which brought in plenty of money for themselves and their friends. But most of them did not really intend to sacrifice the poor, and even in the years between 1815 and 1820 there were already men in Parliament



William Cobbett
(1762-1835)

who succeeded before long, as we shall see, in making great changes for the better.

It has been said, indeed, that the period of the Napoleonic war made the governing classes of our nation, on the whole, more serious and more patriotic than they had been before. In the eighteenth century, many ministers thought it quite fair to take money for using their power

to help their friends, and members of Parliament were often paid in one way or another for their votes in the House of Commons. Yet there were those who refused to make money out of politics, as both the elder and the younger Pitt had done. After the war, the custom of giving and taking bribes in Parliament practically disappeared. In the great struggle with Napoleon everybody had realised, more than ever before, how much they cared for England, and they were not ashamed of being in earnest about their duty to the state.

Together with this change there came others. The habits of hard drinking and of gambling for high stakes did not disappear, but they are said to have been less widespread in the early nineteenth century than they had been thirty years before. Some writers have said that King George III's son, usually called the Regent, would never have been hated as he was if he had lived altogether in the eighteenth century. Since George III became insane in his old age, the prince practically took the place of king for some years; that is what is meant by a regency. Both during these years and after he came to the throne in 1820 as George IV, he was a very selfish and unprincipled man, caring for little except his own pleasure. He had, of course, a number of friends and followers, but by the greater part of the nation he was thoroughly detested, because they had begun to have a higher standard of conduct for men in high positions. It was another sign of the times that some of the more brutal amusements of ordinary people, such as bull-baiting, dog-fighting and cock-fighting, began to be discouraged and to grow much less common.

In other ways, too, there were changes and progress, which had begun while the war was still going on. Al-

though the government and Parliament had been too much occupied by the war to attend to very much else, this was not the case with private persons. Scientific men were working busily, especially at chemistry, in which important discoveries were made. A well-known man of this time was Sir Humphry Davy, who was particularly interested in finding out ways by which



Sir Humphry Davy
(1778-1829)

science could be applied to ordinary life. One way was to improve the soil for growing certain crops by the use of chemicals, a plan which was greatly developed afterwards. But Davy's most famous invention was the safety-lamp for miners, one which they could carry about in the coal mines without fear of causing an explosion. This made a great difference in the life of a miner, and

the new lamp was called a "davy" in remembrance. Another discovery of the war time was the possibility of using coal-gas for lighting, although this did not become common for a good many years afterwards. During the same period people were constantly finding new uses to which steam-power could be put. It was first applied to printing, for example, in the office of *The Times*, just a year before the end of the war.

A good deal of building, also, was undertaken about



The National Gallery

this time, although none of it was specially beautiful. Architects were inclined to try imitating all sorts of different styles, and could not make up their minds which suited our country best. In London, the General Post Office, Dulwich Picture Gallery and several churches and other public buildings date from the early years of the century. So does the National Gallery, which is one of the poorest of all. Regent Street and Regent's Park were laid out during the time when George III's son was

acting as Regent, as their names remind us ; and in other towns there are streets and squares called after the same prince.

The people who walked about these streets must have looked very different from the passers-by of our own day, but a good deal more modern than the men and women of the eighteenth century with their powdered wigs, cocked hats, or enormous hoops. Women now wore close-fitting dresses with high waists, and men had begun to have what were called "chimney-pot" hats of much the same shape as the silk hats of to-day. Ladies' dresses were still almost always made of muslin, silk, or some other thin material, with shawls or "pelisses" over them for out-of-doors ; and when, a little later, the habit began of wearing cloth dresses even in the house, there were grave fears that women's health would be ruined by doing such a thing. They went out much less, particularly in bad weather, than women and girls do now, and did not play open-air games. The novels of Jane Austen, written just before and during this period, give a most interesting and amusing picture of the life of quiet, well-to-do people. They make us realise, too, more clearly that our forefathers did not follow the daily events of the struggle against Napoleon with the same close attention that we give to the war of our own day. They did not hear nearly so much about it, or get the news anything like so quickly ; and many of the more ignorant, even when they were suffering from the consequences of the war, did not properly understand what was causing their hardships.

It has often happened in the history of the world that a time of war and disturbance, though it cannot produce good laws, is very fruitful in works of literature and art.

This was largely true of the period of the Napoleonic war in England. Painting is an art in which our countrymen have never reached the greatest heights, but one fine artist, Turner, was beginning his work during the years just before Waterloo. Many of his beautiful pictures are now to be seen in our National Gallery. In poetry,



Statue of Sir Walter Scott

(1771-1832)

(In the Scott Monument, Edinburgh)

some very famous names belong to the early nineteenth century. Of one writer, Sir Walter Scott, it has been said that his work shows the influence of the excitement and the adventurous stir of war, quite apart from any thought of its evils and sadness. His *Waverley Novels*, which began to appear in 1814, are, perhaps, the best historical stories and tales of adventure in our language.

And in a poem by Scott called *Marmion* there is one of the finest descriptions of a battle ever written. This came out just about the time when the struggle in Europe was at its fiercest, and though it has nothing to do with Napoleon, and is an account of the fight at Flodden Field hundreds of years before, still the warlike spirit of the time may well have been the cause of both the splendid writing and the lively interest with which it was read.

(From *Marmion*, Canto VI.).

By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell ;
For still the Scots around their King
Unbroken fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vanward wing,
 Where Huntley, and where Home ?——
O for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne
 That to King Charles did come,
When Roland brave, and Oliver,
And every paladin and peer,
 On Roncesvalles died !
Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain
And turn the doubtful day again
 While yet on Flodden side
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils and bleeds and dies
 Our Caledonian pride !
In vain the wish—for far away,
While spoil and havoc mark their way,
Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray——
“ O Lady,” cries the Monk, “ away ! ”
 And placed her on her steed ;

And led her to the chapel fair
 Of Tilmouth upon Tweed.
 There all the night they spent in prayer,
 And at the dawn of morning, there
 She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

* * * * *

But as they left the darkening heath,
 More desperate grew the strife of death.
 The English shafts in volleys hailed,
 In headlong charge their horse assailed ;
 Front, flank, and rear the squadrons sweep,
 To break the Scottish circle deep
 That fought around their King.
 But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
 Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
 Though billmen ply the ghastly blow,
 Unbroken was the ring ;
 The stubborn spearmen still made good
 Their dark impenetrable wood,
 Each stepping where his comrade stood
 The instant that he fell.
 No thought was there of dastard flight ;
 Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
 Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
 As fearlessly and well ;
 Till utter darkness closed her wing
 O'er their thin host, and wounded King.
 Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
 Led back from strife his shattered bands ,
 And from the charge they drew
 As mountain waves from wasted lands
 Sweep back to ocean blue.
 Then did their loss his foeman know ;
 Their King, their lords, their mightiest low,
 They melted from the field as snow,
 When streams are swol'n, and south winds blow,
 Dissolves in silent dew.

Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless splash,
 While many a broken band,
 Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
 To gain the Scottish land ;
 To town and tower, to down and dale,
 To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
 And raise the universal wail.
 Tradition, legend, tune, and song
 Shall many an age that wail prolong ;
 Still from the sire the son shall hear
 Of the stern strife and carnage drear
 Of Flodden's fatal field,
 Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear,
 And broken was her shield !

II. THE SETTLEMENT OF SOME GREAT QUESTIONS

As the years went by, between about 1820 and 1830, government and Parliament grew rather unsettled, and there were difficulties in finding ministers who would work well together. This was because some of them, supported by a growing party in the House of Commons, and in the nation, wanted to make some important changes, while others, with their own party, wanted to go on in the old ways. King George IV, so far as he had any influence, was always on the side of those who objected to change. But everybody knew that if the majority in Parliament was really in favour of reforms, the king and the old Tory leaders, as they were called, would have to give way.

Besides questions which had to be settled at home,

there were others, connected with the part our country ought to play in foreign affairs. Ever since the downfall of Napoleon, Europe had been mainly controlled by the rulers of all the more powerful states except Great Britain—that is, of Russia, Austria, Prussia, France and Spain. These monarchs called their league “the Holy Alliance”; but the object of it was to prevent any nation from rising against its rulers, however bad they might be, or from insisting on better laws and more freedom. Though our governments had never belonged to the Alliance, they had not opposed it; and no objection had been made in this country when Austrian armies invaded Italy to put down the party of freedom there, or when French troops did the same thing in Spain.

But there was an English minister named Canning, who had a different opinion as to what we ought to do, and when he came into power he did not let the monarchs of the Holy Alliance have everything quite as they chose. The king of France at that time was one of the old royal family who had been brought back again, and not at all a strong or determined person even in his own old-fashioned ideas. He wanted to send soldiers against the people of Portugal as he had done against those of Spain, but when Canning warned and threatened him he gave up his scheme. Then in other quite different parts of the world our government began to stand by those who wanted liberty and independence. The colonies founded by Spain more than two centuries before in South America had been in rebellion for some time against the bad government of the Spanish king; now, partly through British influence, they were allowed to cut themselves free entirely, and manage their own affairs. They have done so ever since, not in a very

orderly fashion, but at any rate better than they were managed by the old court and nobles of Spain.

In the east of Europe, about the same time, there was a fierce struggle for liberty going on, one with which Englishmen felt more sympathy than with any other. For four hundred years Greece had been under the rule of the Turks, a warlike race, who were good at conquering other people, but very bad at governing them. Turkish sultans and their officers had robbed and oppressed the Greeks, and made their country a miserable one to live in, until at last the people determined they would bear it no longer. Canning was strongly on the side of the Greeks, and encouraged everybody in England who wanted to send them money, or to go out and fight as a volunteer with their troops. A great many did so, partly because of their feeling that every nation should rule itself if it chose, and partly for the sake of the Greeks in particular, since in old days they had been the greatest race of thinkers and poets in the world. Amongst these volunteers was the famous poet, Lord Byron, who had a great deal of influence, and wrote most stirring about the Greeks and their struggle. He died of fever not very long after going out, but he had already done a good deal to help the movement forward.

It was very unfortunate that Canning also died suddenly when he had been Prime Minister only a few months. His successor was not nearly so eager to help the Greeks or anybody else who wanted liberty; and although our fleet fought a victorious battle against the Turks in the Bay of Navarino, this was the doing of the admiral in command rather than of the government at home. Greece was, indeed, declared independent shortly afterwards, but some of the territory which the

people considered theirs had to be left in the hands of the Turks. In other parts of the Continent, too, our government abandoned Canning's policy of helping peoples in revolt against bad rulers; and even at home the 'old' Tories would most likely have delayed the reforms which were needed, if younger men had not now begun to come forward. But luckily a group appeared



The Bay of Navarino

in the House of Commons and the Ministry who were determined to take a new line on the great questions of the day.

Religious Equality

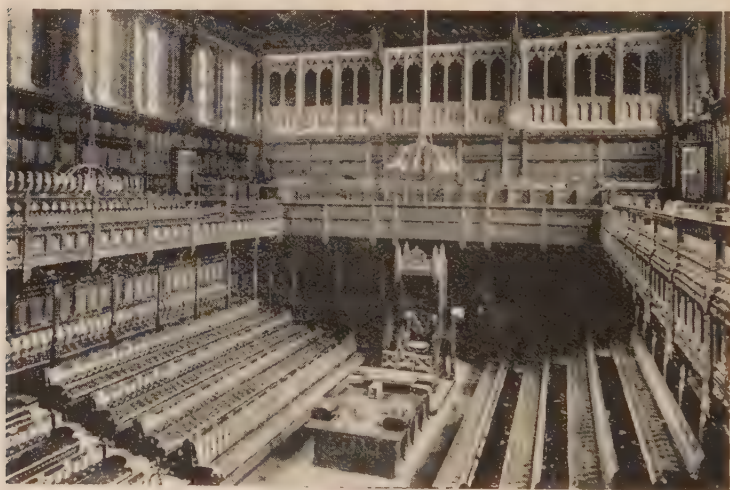
One of these questions was the freedom and equality of people holding different forms of religion. In old days, as we know already, it had been regarded as a matter of

course for rulers to decide what church people should attend, and what doctrines they ought to believe. The only difference in this respect between a tyrannical government and a tolerant one had been that under the first a man might have to die or be exiled for the sake of his religion, while under the second he was, as a rule, only obliged to live very quietly, and to lose many of the rights and privileges which other people enjoyed.

During the eighteenth century, however, opinions on this matter had changed a good deal, in our country especially. There was a growing feeling that it would be absurd to prevent a man from going into the army or the civil service, or from belonging to a town council, as the seventeenth century laws laid down, because he was a Nonconformist instead of being a member of the Church of England. But all the same, nobody quite liked to do away with these laws altogether; when any statesman proposed it, there was always some one else who thought it would be rash and dangerous. So, for a long time, the government had adopted the plan of retaining the laws but allowing them to be broken. Nonconformists used to hold offices they were forbidden to hold, and everybody knew they did so; but they were not punished for it, and every year an Act was passed declaring that nothing should be done to those who had committed this offence. This arrangement only applied, however, to Protestant dissenters. Ever since the days of Spanish, and afterwards of French, tyranny, the laws which prevented Roman Catholics from going into Parliament, or holding any government post had been not only kept up, but enforced. There were very few Roman Catholics in England, but a great many in Ireland, where the burden of these laws was felt to be very heavy.

32 SETTLEMENT OF SOME GREAT QUESTIONS

Ever since the days of Pitt, in the first years of the war, there had been talk of Catholic Emancipation, as it was called. This meant that Roman Catholics should be allowed to do what other people did; and the change would very likely have come at that time, when ideas about freedom were gaining ground, if alarm at the violence of the French Revolution, and then the long war against Napoleon, had not turned many people's



The House of Commons

thoughts against it. About Protestant dissenters, on the other hand, reformers had scarcely troubled at all, no doubt because the odd arrangement we have described made their case less pressing. However, they were the first, after all, to have their grievances remedied. The old laws were repealed in 1828, and from that time forward, Nonconformists had the same rights, where the government was concerned, as members of the Church of England. They still could not go to the universities

of Oxford and Cambridge; but Parliament was not responsible for that, although it afterwards had to interfere and say the rule must be abolished.

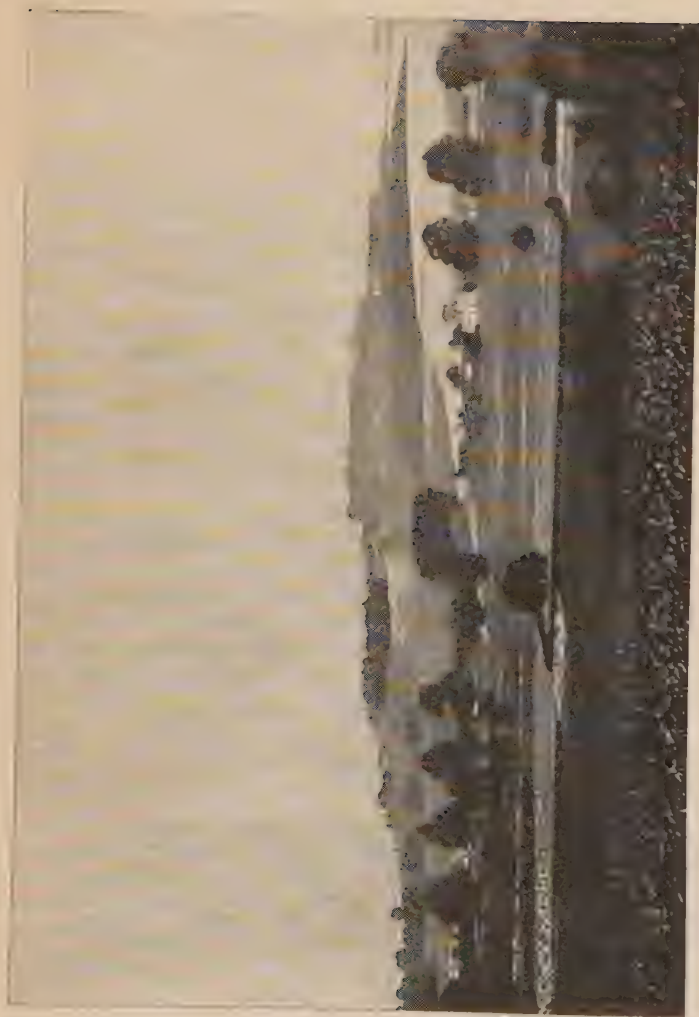
The Catholic Emancipation Act came a year later. It was brought forward by one of the younger statesmen, Sir Robert Peel, who afterwards became very well known. He would probably not have succeeded, however, in getting the new law passed but for a very clever Irishman, named O'Connell, who for some years had been making a great stir about the matter in his own country. He had formed a League, named The Catholic Association, which was always having great meetings and processions and demonstrations; O'Connell with his splendid speeches roused Irishmen to a high pitch of enthusiasm. They used even to pay what was called "the Catholic Rent," or money collected for the purposes of the league, without a murmur, and it was said that O'Connell got his Catholic Rent much more regularly than the king got the taxes. His final stroke was to be elected for Parliament, although he knew quite well that the law, as it was, did not allow him to sit there. The feeling grew so strong that many of the English Ministers believed there would be civil war in Ireland unless something were done. So the Act was passed, and everybody in the United Kingdom except the Sovereign, the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, might be a Roman Catholic if he pleased. This, of course, was only fair and just, but if our government thought that they would quiet O'Connell in that way they were entirely mistaken. He started a new movement at once for what was called "Repeal" of the Act of Union, which meant very much what was afterwards meant by "Home Rule." O'Connell did not get a separate Irish Parliament, but he brought a

number of followers of his own to the British one at Westminster, so that they could keep on asking for what they felt their country wanted.

Reform of the House of Commons

The British Parliament, in the meantime, underwent the great change which some of its ablest members thought had long been needed. The years 1830 to 1832 were filled with the struggle for the first great measure of Reform, which took away from the wealthy and land-owning classes the power they had enjoyed of almost filling the House of Commons with their families and friends. This law was the first great step towards what is called the democratic government of our country, which means that practically every man has a share in electing somebody to represent him in Parliament. The Act of 1832 did not, of course, bring about this state of affairs all at once, but when Reform had been so vigorously begun, it was certain to go further and further.

To people accustomed to think the House of Commons very satisfactory as it was, the proposals of the new Bill seemed quite far-reaching enough. It is said that when one of the ministers first read out in the House the long list of decayed places which in future were not to elect members, the whole party opposite to him simply burst out laughing. They could not believe for a moment that such changes would be made, and they could hardly understand that the government seriously believed it either. But what seems to us now the really astonishing thing is that such one-sided arrangements had been allowed to go on so long as they did. Leading men had certainly said often enough that the system ought to be



Old Sarum, near Salisbury

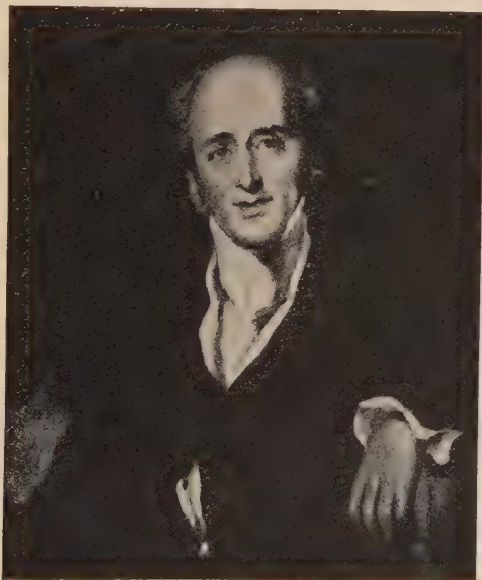
(In 1830 a deserted site, but represented by two members in Parliament)

altered, because Parliament did not now represent the nation; large new towns, they pointed out, sent no members to the House of Commons, while old villages with a handful of people in them elected a member at the bidding of the neighbouring land-owner.

Out of a House of Commons of about six hundred members, seventy were elected by places with scarcely any voters at all. At Old Sarum, near Salisbury, there was an absolutely deserted site of what had once been a village, and this place had kept its right of returning two members to Parliament. At another place, Gatton, which sent two representatives, there was nothing left but an ancient wall. Then there were forty-six other places, electing altogether ninety members, which had less than fifty voters each. All these were called "rotten boroughs," and sometimes they were actually put up for sale, so that the man who bid highest could go to Parliament. In other cases the seat was simply given to some friend of the landowner, and in this way more than three hundred members were actually chosen by about a hundred and fifty patrons. At the same time some flourishing towns, such as Birmingham, returned no members at all. We can easily see that there was likely to be a hard struggle over a Bill to put an end to all this. There were wealthy and powerful people feeling strongly against any change, while those who felt indignant at the state of things were equally determined that the Bill should pass.

It must have been an exciting time for those who fought on either side. The real beginning was in the year 1830, when what was called a "Whig" ministry came into power. The Whigs of the early nineteenth century were something like our Liberals now; at any rate, they were more inclined than the Tories to believe that by altering

things you might improve them. The Prime Minister who retired to make way for the Whigs was the Duke of Wellington. Ever since the end of the great war he had been concerned in politics, but had not been nearly so successful in them as in the generalship of his younger days. He was the strongest of the old Tories, hating



Earl Grey
(1764–1845)

the very name of Parliamentary Reform; and in this the great majority of the House of Lords, in which he sat, agreed with him. In the House of Commons Sir Robert Peel, whom most people admired as an experienced statesman, led the party against Reform. But the government which came into power to carry it out had some able men too, such as Lord Grey, the Prime Minister,

and Lord John Russell, who had a great deal to do with the Bill. A young member called Macaulay, afterwards famous as the historian Lord Macaulay, came into Parliament about this time and was eagerly on the side of Reform.

There were two events of the year 1830 much in favour of the party of change. One was a fresh Revolution in France, which resulted in the exile of the king, one of that old Bourbon family which had been recalled to the throne in 1815. Compared with the great Revolution of the eighteenth century this was a small affair, very soon over ; and instead of declaring a republic, the French this time chose another king, whom they thought they could trust to carry out the wishes of the nation. Still, the new outburst of talk about freedom stirred the interest of many people in England, and others, who would otherwise have heard little of what went on abroad, knew at least that the dethroned king had fled to this country for shelter. The other event favourable to the Whigs was the death of King George IV. The brother who succeeded him as William IV was much more ready to listen to proposals for change ; and although the king could not really prevent his ministers from doing what they liked, if Parliament agreed, still it certainly made things easier to have him ready to approve their policy.

The Bill was brought forward early in the year 1831, and all the chief supporters of the government were greatly pleased with it. " Well, what think you of our Reform plan ? " wrote one of them in a letter to a friend. " My rapture with it increases every hour, and my astonishment at its boldness. It was all very well for a historian like Thomas Creevy "—this was himself—" to lay down the law, as he did in his pamphlet, that all these rotten

nomination boroughs were modern usurpations . . . but here is a little fellow not weighing above eight stone, Lord John Russell by name, who, without talking of law or anything else, creates in fact a new House of Commons, quite in conformity to the original formation of that body. . . . What a *coup* it is! It is its boldness that makes its success so certain." But the difficulty was, as ministers knew very well, that the Bill had to be passed by a majority of a House of Commons which had been elected on the very system now to be destroyed. There were, of course, a good number of members who did not sit for rotten boroughs; but amongst those who did, a man had to be very public-spirited to vote for destroying an arrangement so convenient for himself. The first debate lasted for seven sittings, and was hot and keen on both sides. Friends of the members listened eagerly from the galleries or waited impatiently in their clubs for news of the debate. When Macaulay sat down after urging his arguments in favour of the Bill, he was sent for by the Speaker, or Chairman of the Commons, who said that never in a long experience had he seen the House so stirred and excited.

All Bills have to be voted upon three times in each of the two Houses of Parliament before they can become law, and on its second reading the Reform Bill of 1831 was passed by a majority of only one vote. At this the Opposition gained both confidence and strength, for many members who had not quite liked to vote against Reform before, now thought that, if they did so, they might, after all, be on the winning side. On the third reading the Bill was rejected by 299 votes against 291, and the government was beaten.

When this happens, if the defeat is on an important

subject, ministers are bound to do one of two things; they must either resign their offices or else advise the king to dissolve Parliament and have a general election, in order to see whether the country wishes to support them or the Opposition. In 1831 the Tories would have liked the government to resign; but Grey and Russell were not going to do this, because they still hoped and believed that a general election would send back a lot



Westminster Hall

(Was complete in its present form at the end of the reign of Richard II)

more members in favour of Reform. They advised William IV to dissolve Parliament: and as he was inclined to be on their side he was very ready to do so. Indeed, when he heard that one of the Tories in the House of Lords was going to bring forward a protest against having a general election, the king was very indignant at such an interference with what was his own affair. He declared that he would go down at once, that very hour, to Westminster and announce the dissolution of Parliament;

and when someone objected that the royal carriages could not be ready so soon, he answered, "Very well, then, I will go in a hackney-coach." When he reached Westminster Hall, the Lords were in the middle of an angry debate. They heard the booming of the cannon which announced that the king was approaching, and knowing what this meant, grew angrier than ever. One of them, Lord Mansfield, actually went on speaking after the king came in, and had to be pulled down by force into his seat. However, when the Commons had been summoned from their own chamber to listen, William IV calmly announced that Parliament was to be dissolved, and so the matter was settled without further delay.

The enemies of Reform had not done themselves any good by trying to prevent a general election, but rather the contrary. Everybody's attention was caught by what had happened ; the king's saying about the hackney-coach was repeated everywhere, and encouraged many cautious people by making them feel that the court was in favour of the Whigs. The elections were carried on amid great excitement, and the cry raised all over the country was, "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill!" Of course the Tories used their influence, also, for the side they believed to be right, but the middle-class people, who were to have votes under the new system, were naturally more numerous and made a great stir by holding meetings and speaking in public. Even the working-men, though they knew that they themselves would still have no votes if the Bill was passed, felt that good would come out of it for them. They gathered eagerly everywhere to show themselves in favour of it, and when the London streets were illuminated during the elections, crowds marched about breaking the windows

of those who showed no lights and were known to be in opposition to the Reform Bill. Even at Apsley House, where the Duke of Wellington lived, the windows were shattered; this was a bitter experience for a man who had been so popular as Wellington was after Waterloo, and no doubt it helped to confirm him in his hatred of change.

When Parliament met again there was no doubt that in the House of Commons the greater number of members were now in favour of Reform. The Opposition speakers were able to cause some delay, but not to get the Bill thrown out again; and by the autumn of 1831 it had passed all its three readings in the Commons. But then, to become law, it had to go to the House of Lords, and be agreed to by a majority there. It was known that more of the Peers were against the Bill than for it, but the doubt was whether they would think it safe or wise to oppose what most of the nation evidently wanted. "What will the Lords do?" was asked all over the country; and after a debate lasting five nights, with much eloquent speaking, the question was answered by the rejection of the Bill.

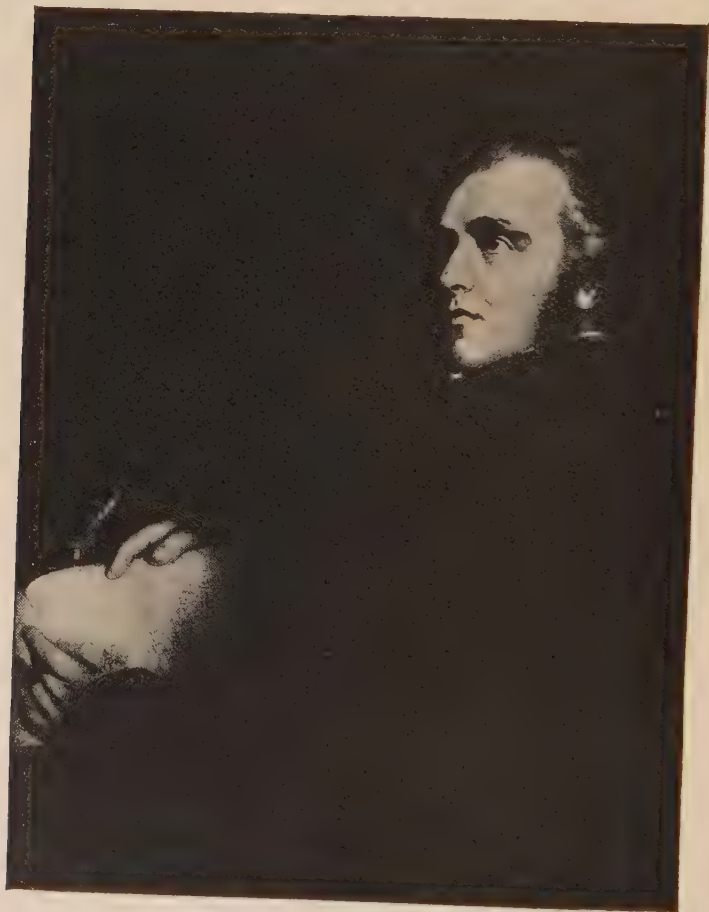
If there had been excitement in the country before, there was much greater excitement now. In the House of Commons the Whig speakers poured out their indignation at what the Lords had done, and prophesied that the anger of the people might soon break all bounds. Unluckily it seemed as if this prophecy were coming true, for during the autumn months there was rioting and violence in many parts of the country. Londoners were highly excited, but did not do anything worse than stone-throwing. At Nottingham, however, there were rioters wicked enough to burn down the Castle, in order

to revenge themselves on the Duke of Newcastle for his vote in the House of Lords. At Derby the town jail was stormed, and the prisoners let out. And at Bristol still worse things happened. Beginning by an attack on a well-known opponent of Reform, who was visiting the town, drunken crowds burned down many fine buildings, including the Bishop's Palace, robbed the Mansion-house, and for three days kept the whole city in confusion and misery. In all these places there were no doubt roughs and bad characters who took advantage of the general excitement. But they would not have been able to do so if the feeling amongst the people had not been widespread and strong.

Early next year, when Parliament came together again after a recess, the Reform Bill was once more passed through the House of Commons and sent to the Lords. But in spite of all the signs of popular feeling nobody believed that even this time they would accept it. Another difficulty for Grey and his friends was that King William did not appear to sympathise with them so much as he had done before. He had been rather alarmed by the disturbances in the country, and took the view that though some reform would be a good thing, the Whigs were in danger of going too far. It had been suggested to him, moreover, that if the Lords would not pass the Bill, he might raise enough Whig commoners to the peerage to give the Reformers a majority. King William did not like this idea very much, and when he found that he would have to make fifty new peers he was altogether dismayed. So, as soon as it became certain that the House of Lords was going to alter the Bill beyond recognition, and Grey said he must either resign or have his new peers, the King agreed to the resignation, and

44 SETTLEMENT OF SOME GREAT QUESTIONS

said that the old Duke of Wellington had better come back and be Prime Minister again. The idea in this was that



Thomas Babington, Lord Macaulay
(1800-1859)

Wellington should bring forward a milder measure of Reform, and that the House of Lords would then regard the case as hopeless and give in.

However, although the Duke would have agreed to this plan because he thought it his duty, Sir Robert Peel in the House of Commons took a different view. He objected to Reform, and thought he ought not to have anything to do with it. Moreover, while these arguments were going on, petitions from the whole country came pouring in, noisy meetings were held, Reformers in the House of Commons grew more and more excited. The king and Wellington saw that their plan was hopeless, and prudent people began to be afraid of something almost like a revolution if the nation did not get what it wanted. William IV saw that if he did not want to make fifty new peers he must use his influence with the more obstinate of the old ones; and the matter was finally settled by Wellington's walking out of the House on the night of the debate, followed by about a hundred of his friends. In June 1832 the Reform Bill became law.

Some of the speeches made in Parliament during these various debates were very stirring and eloquent, and worth reading and remembering. Here is a paragraph from one of Macaulay's :—

. . . “ Turn where we may, within, around, the voice of great events is proclaiming to us—Reform, that you may preserve. Now, therefore, while everything at home and abroad proclaims ruin to those who persist in a hopeless struggle against the spirit of the age, now while the crash of the proudest throne of the Continent is still sounding in our ears, now while the roof of a British palace affords ignominious shelter to the exiled heir of forty kings, now while we see on every side ancient institutions subverted and great societies dissolved, now while the heart of England is still sound, now while old feelings and old associations retain a power and a charm

which may too soon pass away, now in this your accepted time, now in this your day of salvation, take counsel, not of prejudice, not of party spirit, not of the ignominious pride of a fatal consistency, but of history, of reason, of the ages which are past, of the signs of this most portentous time. Pronounce in a manner worthy of the expectation with which this great debate has been anticipated, and of the long remembrance which it will leave behind. Renew the youth of the State. Save property, divided against itself. Save the multitude, endangered by its own ungovernable passions. Save the aristocracy, endangered by its own unpopular power. Save the greatest, and fairest, and most highly civilised community that ever existed from calamities which may in a few days sweep away all the rich heritage of so many ages of wisdom and glory. The danger is terrible. The time is short. If this Bill should be rejected, I pray to God that none of those who concur in rejecting it may ever remember their votes with unavailing remorse, amidst the wreck of laws, the confusion of ranks, the spoliation of property, and the dissolution of social order."

III. SOME OTHER CHANGES

BOTH Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform were what are called great changes of principle, which took place because there was a strong and widely-spread feeling in favour of them, and which necessarily opened the way to further reforms in the same directions. After Roman Catholics had been given full legal rights it was fairly certain that the government would gradually give up asking any questions at all about religious opinions. Still more, when it had been agreed that elections to the House of Commons must be changed in order to make the House represent some classes of the nation better, there could be no doubt that other changes would be made later to bring the rest of the people into the same position. But besides great decisions of this kind, there were other alterations both of laws and habits which had a great deal to do with making the country gradually what it is to-day. Some of them were brought about by particular men and women, or by groups in Parliament who pressed for measures of which most people hardly saw the full advantage at the time.

The Work of Huskisson and Peel

Robert Peel and his friend Huskisson were two statesmen who did good work of this kind, even in the years before the Reform Bill. Huskisson's chief interest was in money matters and in trade. Long before most people,

he took the view that the best cure for the poverty and suffering of the working-classes would be greater freedom in commerce and manufactures. There were some old laws called the Navigation Acts, which were intended to prevent foreign ships from bringing cargoes to Great Britain, and did to a great extent prevent them. The idea had been to protect our own shipping from competition, but, of course, another result was to limit very much the quantity of foreign goods brought into the country. Huskisson succeeded in getting these Navigation Acts abolished, in spite of the outcry of the ship-owners, who all declared they would be ruined in a very short time. But they did not allow for one fact, which was that foreign countries which were restricted in this way by us very naturally did the same sort of thing in their turn. If we would not allow French silk goods to come to us in a French ship, it was not likely that the government of France would let British iron goods go there freely in British ships. Huskisson bargained with the foreign nations and got them to do away with their restrictions in return for the abolition of ours. The result was that within twenty years British shipping had increased immensely.

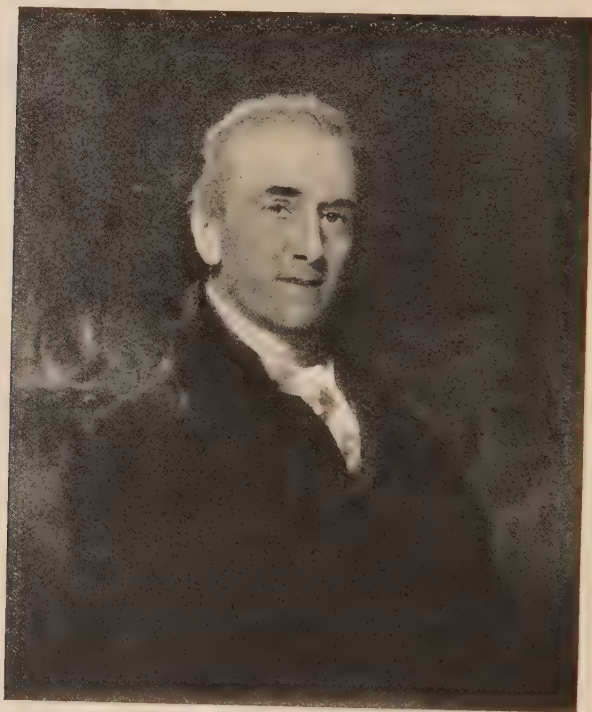
Huskisson followed the same idea in getting certain commodities of trade freed from the duties which had always been paid on them, and he met with much the same kind of resistance. Taxes had been regularly levied, for instance, on all sorts of silk as it came into this country—on raw silk sent here to be manufactured, and on silk goods made up in France. Most of these taxes were now taken off, and our manufacturers were especially afraid of French goods being let in free, for fear that their own customers at home would buy from France instead.

However, even this did not happen at that time, although the danger was certainly greater than it had been in the case of the shipping, for silk-making was an old and prosperous trade in France, and seemed to belong to that country almost as sea-faring did to us.

The wool trade was another to be freed, and this did undoubtedly help both manufacturers and sheep-farmers. Hitherto manufacturers had had to pay a duty on all raw wool brought in from abroad, while wool-merchants, had had to pay in the same way on all sent out. This seemed to Huskisson a foolish arrangement, so he took away both taxes at once; and as the goods naturally became cheaper when there was no duty to add to the price, people bought more of them and the trade flourished. Even with regard to the laws which laid a heavy duty on imported corn, Huskisson and Peel together succeeded in getting some change made. This was the most difficult business of all, because everything which kept the price of corn high put money into the pockets of the landlords and farmers, and so was keenly supported by them. They were able, of course, to sell their home-grown crops at the price of the foreign corn with the duty added, so naturally the Corn Laws were extremely profitable to them. But at last, on account of the great distress in the country, Parliament was persuaded to agree to an arrangement by which, when the price of corn was in itself very high, the tax was to be rather less. When the price fell the tax would rise again, so even that did not make bread anything but very dear.

Peel's own work in his earlier days was of a rather different kind, but very useful too. One thing he did was to enquire into the state of the criminal law, and to urge that punishments for small offences should not be

dreadfully severe. At that time people could be hanged for stealing a sheep, or for poaching, and boys might be sent to prison for a long term because they had mischievously robbed an orchard. A very good man named



Sir Samuel Romilly

(1757-1818)

Sir Samuel Romilly had done a great deal to persuade Parliament and the country that this was cruel and wrong, and Peel took up the work of having the laws altered.

Another thing he did was to create a new police-force

for London. Before his time there were the most useless and absurd arrangements for guarding and watching the streets, so that nobody who could not defend himself was really safe against pickpockets or roughs in certain parts of the town. There were old-fashioned officials called beadles and constables, but the beadles did not think themselves bound to do much except look after the constables, and these were simply chosen in turn from men living in a particular district, instead of being picked out as especially fitted for the work. Moreover, they were not paid anything for doing this duty, and if they liked they could hire somebody else to do it for them. We may be quite sure that such constables were not very active, and, in any case, all they were expected to do was to spend the night at a watch-house, ready to be called out if necessary. Besides these there were watchmen who walked about the streets at night, but were generally too old or too lazy to interfere if there was any trouble. And there were other separate little forces of police at Westminster and at Bow Street, whose particular duty it was to prevent highway robberies within twenty miles of London; but they were not very successful in doing this. All these were under the control of different people, which made a great deal of confusion and uncertainty.

Peel's idea was to have one single police force under the control of the government, carefully chosen and regularly paid, and wearing a uniform as do soldiers. Many objections were made at the time, and the writer Cobbett, who held sensible opinions on many matters, grew quite unreasonably excited over this, and declared that it was the beginning in England of a secret tyranny like that of some badly governed foreign countries. However, the system did not turn out like that at all. Our Com-

missioners of Police have never been tyrants who arrest people for private grudges of their own, as Cobbett seemed to expect; and the London police-constables, or "peelers," as people used to call them after Sir Robert, are always admired by strangers for their good temper and good manners, and their power of meeting all difficulties successfully. The new plan of 1829 was found to work so well in London that something almost the same was set up later in all other parts of the country.

Progress under the Reformed Parliament

After the Reform Bill had become law, there was, of course, a general election, and a new House of Commons was returned, which had been chosen by the votes of a greatly increased number of people. Most of the members elected by the new voters came to Westminster with the idea that improvements of some kind ought to follow from the Reform of Parliament, and the result was a general feeling in favour of change without any great certainty as to what the changes should be. However, some very important things were, in a sense, waiting to be done. That is to say, that they had been urged for a long time by different groups of people, but nobody had yet succeeded in getting them passed through Parliament.

The Abolition of Slavery

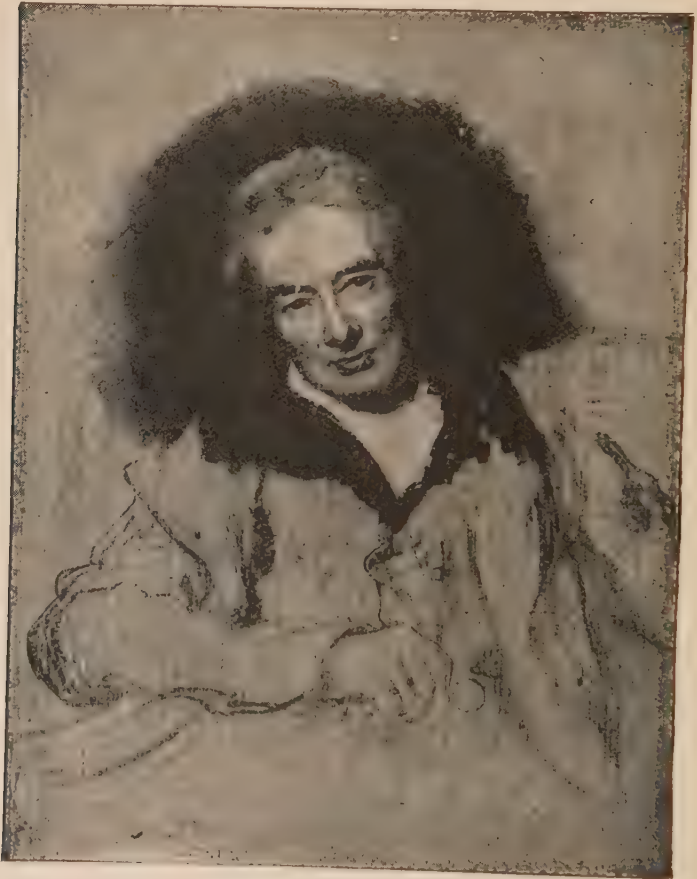
One of these was a law to forbid slavery entirely in the British Dominions, and to set free the slaves who were still living in them. It seems strange that such a law should have had to be made by our Parliament less than a hundred years ago; but the nation had not been roused

until the early years of the nineteenth century to the steady growth of the trade. This business of making money by the sale of African negroes had been going on so long that most Englishmen did not realise how dreadful it was. Yet, even in the seventeenth century, a few thoughtful men had declared it to be wrong ; and in the eighteenth, many of those whose names we know best, including Wesley and Dr Johnson, had protested against it. Quakers always did so, declaring slave-owning to be “ not a commendable or allowed practice,” and, in 1761, went so far as to expel from their Society anybody who engaged in the trade. A few years after that a great English judge, Lord Mansfield, decided that on English soil there could be no such thing as a slave ; the moment that one landed in our country he became free and nobody could prevent it. This made the people who objected to the slave-trade feel all the more strongly that it ought not to exist in our colonies or be carried on in our ships.

The great movement against it began just about the time of the French Revolution, and was headed by William Wilberforce. He belonged to a group of religious men and women who were most earnestly determined on helping other people wherever they could, and at the same time he had the advantage of being intimate with men of high position and great influence. All through the period of the Napoleonic War Wilberforce and his supporters never ceased pressing for a law against the slave-trade. At one time a petition was presented signed by 187,000 women of Great Britain ; and at another the suggestion was made that everybody ought to go without sugar, which was produced by the labour of slaves, until these had been set free.

In the year 1807 the government was persuaded to

bring in a measure to forbid any more negroes being sold in our dominions, or carried about in our ships.



William Wilberforce
(1759-1833)

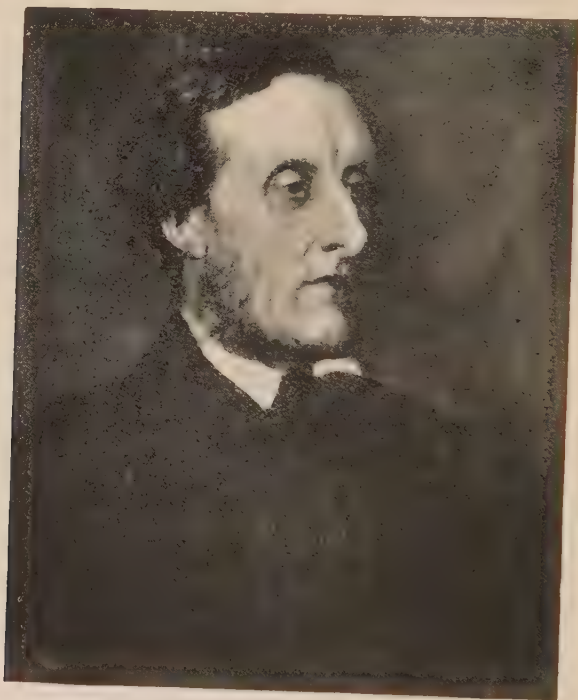
That, of course, was good so far as it went, but it did not satisfy those who hated slavery altogether, because the negroes who were in the Indies already and the children

born there were not set free. It took another twenty-five years, up to 1833, to bring this about and get the law passed which abolished the whole system for ever in our empire. But the planters who had owned slaves had to have their loss made up to them by the British nation, and this cost our forefathers twenty millions of pounds. Wilberforce died just a month before the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery became law, but he probably knew that what he had toiled hard for was coming at last. He was buried in Westminster Abbey between Canning and Pitt.

The Factory Acts, and Lord Shaftesbury

Another law very soon passed by the Reformed Parliament was the Factory Act of 1833, and this affected the lives of great numbers of our people, especially of children. Moreover it was not, like the abolition of slavery, the final step in putting an end to an old evil ; it was the first of a series of laws which were aimed at improving the health and increasing the happiness of working people. The idea at the root of them is that those who are not in a position to help themselves ought to be protected by law against being driven by their poverty into working too hard, and against being obliged to carry on their trade in unwholesome conditions. Since then, this idea has been carried a long way, but to the manufacturers of the early nineteenth century it was new and not very welcome. The theory of most of them was that if anybody, man, woman, or child, agreed to work for any number of hours, no one else had the right to interfere. The view that the government had the right and ought to use it did not actually come up for the first time in 1833. There had been one or two earlier laws to bring children's working

hours from twelve, or even sixteen, down to ten ; but they only applied to cotton mills, and nothing whatever had been done about any other trade. A man called Michael Sadler had urged that other laws should be passed, but in the old Parliament he had not succeeded. The



Anthony Ashley-Cooper, seventh Earl of Shaftesbury
(1801-1885)

name which will always be remembered in connection with the Factory Acts is that of Lord Shaftesbury.

Lord Shaftesbury, or Lord Ashley as he was during his father's life-time, entered Parliament at the age of twenty-five. From the first he showed that his chief

interest was in trying to improve the lot of the unfortunate, and he had already done some work of this kind before he turned his thoughts to the factory-workers of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Ashley was a clear and forcible speaker, and when he described in the House of Commons what he had seen during a tour round the mills and the hospitals in the north of England, he produced, for the moment, a great effect. He himself was tall and handsome, with a particularly fine figure, and, perhaps for that reason, it seemed all the more shocking when he related that he had seen many mill-hands so bent and crippled by their work that they were "just like a crooked alphabet." Other men had lately been saying the same thing even more strongly, but they were not members of Parliament, and could not have influenced the government very much without Ashley's help. One of them, a country squire in Yorkshire, had been told by a manufacturer that children in factories were worse off than East Indian slaves. So he wrote a number of letters to *The Leeds Mercury* headed "Slavery in Yorkshire," and although they were almost too angry and violent to have much effect in Parliament, these letters did help to rouse a strong feeling amongst people living in the West Riding. At Leeds and other places public meetings were held and resolutions passed declaring that ten hours a day was long enough for children to work, that grown men were actually kept out of employment by the system, and that "it is a stain on the character of Britain that her sons and daughters, in their infant days, should now be worked longer than the adult mechanic, agricultural labourer, or negro slave."

In spite of all this, however, the Act of 1833 did not

do anything like so much as Ashley wished. His opponents tried to believe—and no doubt most of them did—that the long hours of work were not bad for boys and girls, and were necessary for the manufacturer. Something was done by this law to keep little children of less than eight years old out of mills, and to reduce the labour of those between eight and twelve years; but young people between twelve and eighteen were left to look after themselves. Ashley was disappointed, but none the less determined to go on and try again. Until the year 1844, he kept up this work steadily, with many other things besides; he was always finding out new facts, bringing up arguments, urging the change, both in speech and in writing. Then, after eleven years, another law was proposed to limit the hours both for women and for older children, and Ashley spoke for it with great earnestness.

He described how he had lately visited a great factory in Austria, where no labour laws were in force. “I went over the whole,” he said, “and conversed with the managers, who detailed to me the same evils and the same fruits as those I have narrated to the House—prolonged labour of sixteen and seventeen hours, intense fatigue, enfeebled frame, frequent consumptive disorders, and early deaths . . . and the manager added that in ten years’ time there would hardly be a man in the whole of those neighbourhoods fit to carry a musket. . . .” Then Ashley described once more what had been discovered about the children in Great Britain, and asked: “Will the House turn a deaf ear to the complaints of suffering that resound from all quarters?” He was not, he declared, a special enemy of factories or their owners, although people had accused him of it. The system

ought to be changed, not because it was worse than anything else, but because it was very bad and could be improved. "I confess that ten years of experience have taught me that avarice and cruelty are not the peculiar and inherent qualities of any one class or occupation. They will ever be found where the means of profit are combined with great and virtually irresponsible power. They will be found wherever interest and selfishness have a purpose to serve and a favourable opportunity."

It is quite certain that Lord Ashley had proved the truth of this, and had a full right to be believed. It was not only rich manufacturers whom he found oppressing children; he fought a great battle with a very different set of men, chimney-sweepers, who employed little boys in a way we should now think very wrong. These lads, who were apprenticed to the sweeps, and called climbing-boys, used to have to creep up chimneys, scraping the soot down, and then slide back again as best they could. This was stopped by law owing to Ashley's efforts, and when sweeps were forced to look about for another way of doing their work they soon managed to find it. Another dreadful evil that he succeeded in checking was the work of women and children underground in mines. Little boys of four and five years old were found to be working in the dark, dragging trucks about for as much sometimes as eighteen hours in the day. This was forbidden by law a few years before the middle of the century.

Even this does not end the story of Ashley's work for the poor. When he became Lord Shaftesbury after his father's death, he had to press for his measures in the House of Lords instead of the House of Commons, but he did it with even more success. One question which interested him very much was the provision of better

houses for working-people in towns. The less prosperous among them were still living, half-way through the century, in dreadful little places, dark, ill-drained and unhealthy. Even in his life-time Shaftesbury did a good deal towards having better ones built, and he started a movement which has gone on ever since, though not so fast as some people wish. Setting up efficient schools for neglected children was another thing Shaftesbury felt strongly about, and he worked hard for the establishment of training-ships and orphanages. In the later years of his life he had an immensely high reputation with all kinds of people, especially those for whom he had worked. It is said that there were two tokens of good feeling he received which he valued more than any others. One was a gift to his wife of an immense bust of himself by four thousand Lancashire mill-hands. The other was a donkey given to him by the costermongers of London. It is also told of him, showing the width of his sympathies, that he once had an invitation from forty well-known London thieves to go and address them. He spoke to a meeting of four hundred and fifty, and so persuasively that the greater number decided to give up their dishonest life and start afresh in a new country. Lord Shaftesbury died, an old man of eighty-four, only fifteen years before the end of the nineteenth century.

The New Poor Law, the Trades' Unions and the Schools

While the factory-workers, at the time when the Reformed Parliament met, needed protection by law against bad employers, the labourers in the country had

to be helped out of the unhappy state to which the authorities themselves had reduced them. The Old Poor Law, of which we have spoken already, was by 1833 frankly admitted to be working extremely badly. The general result of it, as we know, was to encourage people to be idle and to look for parish relief as quite an ordinary thing, and at the same time to make it almost impossible for those who were industrious to earn tolerable wages. When commissions were sent round by the government to enquire into it, they found out everywhere facts which were both shocking and ridiculous. In some places there were able-bodied young men being given in out-door relief perhaps half-a-crown or three shillings a week, and much preferring to live like that than to work, because it left them time for stealing and mischief. In other districts these able-bodied paupers were simply prevented so far as possible from doing any actual harm. "It is more usual," was said in a report made at the time, "to give a rather larger weekly sum, and to force the applicants to give up a certain portion of their time by confining them in a gravel-pit or in some other enclosure, or directing them to sit at a certain spot and do nothing, or obliging them to attend a roll-call several times in the day." Certainly it is not easy to imagine anything much more absurd than to pay strong young men or young women to sit and do nothing.

Of course there were a great many independent labourers besides, and it was remarked by the commission how much superior in every way they were to the men spoilt by receiving parish relief. But the numbers depending on the rates and losing the habit of regular and skilled work were overwhelming, and the government saw that something must be done. The New Poor Law

of 1834 put an end to the plan of giving out-door relief to young and able-bodied people, and laid down that if they could not or would not support themselves they must go into the workhouse. At first this, no doubt, seemed hard to many who had got out of the habit of independence. But it quickly reduced the enormous poor-rates which many parishes had been paying, and it had some little effect in making farmers pay better wages to their men.

The workers themselves, though more in the towns than in the country, were beginning to try and secure higher pay and improved conditions in their own way, instead of by any action of the government. The laws absolutely forbidding "combinations" of workmen had been repealed a few years before, and Unions of the different trades had appeared almost at once. These soon increased in numbers and strength, especially the Builders' Union, which included joiners, masons, plumbers, painters, plasterers, etc., from all parts of England. But, perhaps just because the movement was new, many workmen were at first inclined to go too fast and think that by combining together they could do anything. They did not use their Unions only for advancing the interests of particular trades, but thought that very great changes in the government and even in the general way of life might be brought about by them.

A big association called the "Grand National Consolidated Trades Union" was started with this idea, but was not a success. Employers were still very suspicious of the whole matter, and looked out keenly for anything illegal in the actions of the Union. Moreover, the different trades which made it up did not enjoy having to pay for one another, in the case, for example, of strikes of which they knew nothing. The result was that

some of the most active men grew tired of the Consolidated Union, and turned instead, to what was known as Chartism. This was a movement to urge several important changes in the laws, changes which were grouped together under the name The People's Charter. Feeling ran so high among Chartists that, besides innumerable petitions to Parliament, there were riots and street fighting. But none of their proposed reforms were carried out at that time, and, indeed, it is doubtful whether they would have done working-people much good if they had been. Some, however, such as secret voting by the use of a ballot-box to hold voting-papers, have been carried out since, although others have been dropped altogether. When Chartism, in its turn, appeared to be a disappointment, working-class leaders went back to Trade Unionism, and towards the middle of the century began to develop it on more practical lines. They saw the value of the benefit-club side of Union work and extended it, and also pressed for the removal of a few old laws which still put some obstacles in the way of collective bargaining about wages. Thus, the way was prepared for the Unions to become the powerful bodies they are now. The Miners' Association of Great Britain and Ireland was formed at Wakefield in 1841, and had a very large membership almost at once.

In all these different ways, the state of things amongst the working-classes was being discussed and examined more thoroughly than it ever had been before. Considering how neglected and mismanaged their affairs had been, it is no wonder that there was a good deal to be done. And while the enquiries were being made which led to the New Poor Law and the Factory Acts, another

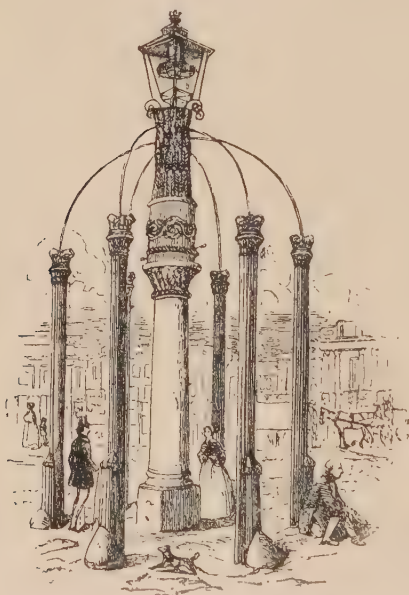
deplorable fact came to light, which was that three-fourths of the poorer children of Great Britain were not being educated at all, even in reading and writing. Their parents could hardly be expected to spare them from working for wages, when there were no schools for most of them to attend. And it was not through anything the government had done that there were schools for even a fourth of the children. This was due to the efforts of private persons, who thought it wrong for the nation to grow up ignorant.

During the eighteenth century a certain number of the clergy had felt it a duty to provide teaching for the children of their parishes, while other people had done the same sort of thing as a charity ; our modern view is that the nation ought to have all children taught, both for their good and its own. The first attempt to bring that view forward was made in 1807, when a Mr Whitbread brought a Bill into Parliament which ordered a school to be set up in every parish and supported by the rates. But the House of Lords would not agree to this, thinking that enough was being done already. So the matter was still left mainly to the clergy. Some leading Nonconformists had also begun to think that the children of their churches ought to be educated. A Quaker named Lancaster was holding large and successful classes at a place in the Borough Road, in Southwark ; and in a few years other dissenters joined him and formed the British and Foreign Schools Society. About the same time the National Society was formed to provide schools for children whose parents belonged to the Church of England. Both of these societies adopted the system of pupil teachers or monitors, which has gone on in some form ever since.

It was in the year 1833, when much else was being done, that the government first recognised the duty of providing out of the taxes some of the money needed for education. This was done by giving grants to the two societies to help them in building their schools. The amount was small at first, but, of course, it steadily increased. Then the government soon found that if it was giving money for schools it must have inspectors to go round and see that the money was properly spent. A few years later, again, the decision was made to help the two training colleges for teachers which had been opened, one for Nonconformists in the Borough Road, and one for Church people at Battersea.

In all this we see the beginnings of our present system of elementary education; but there was, of course, a long way to go and much to be done before schools were anything like what they are now. In those days there were no swimming-baths, workshops, or central halls for lectures and drill. Nor were there separate class-rooms, well-lighted and warmed, with comfortable seats and desks. School children of 1830-40, even in big towns, were usually taught all together in one room, sitting on high forms or little chairs, or sometimes on the floor, and called up a few at a time to stand round the teacher and be questioned. They learned reading, writing and a little arithmetic, and they had their religious teaching; there was very little else, except, indeed, a great deal of sewing for the girls. Some of the teachers were very odd people indeed. There were no hard and fast lines as to who might be appointed in an elementary school, and sometimes the teacher might be a poor old woman who was infirm and nearly blind, or some perfectly helpless person who had failed to make

a living in any other way. This, of course, was a matter of chance, for it might happen, on the other hand, that even in what was called "a dame's school" the dame was very well able to keep her scholars in good order and hard at work. However, just before the middle of the century some steps were taken to keep out the really



An early attempt at street lighting
by gas

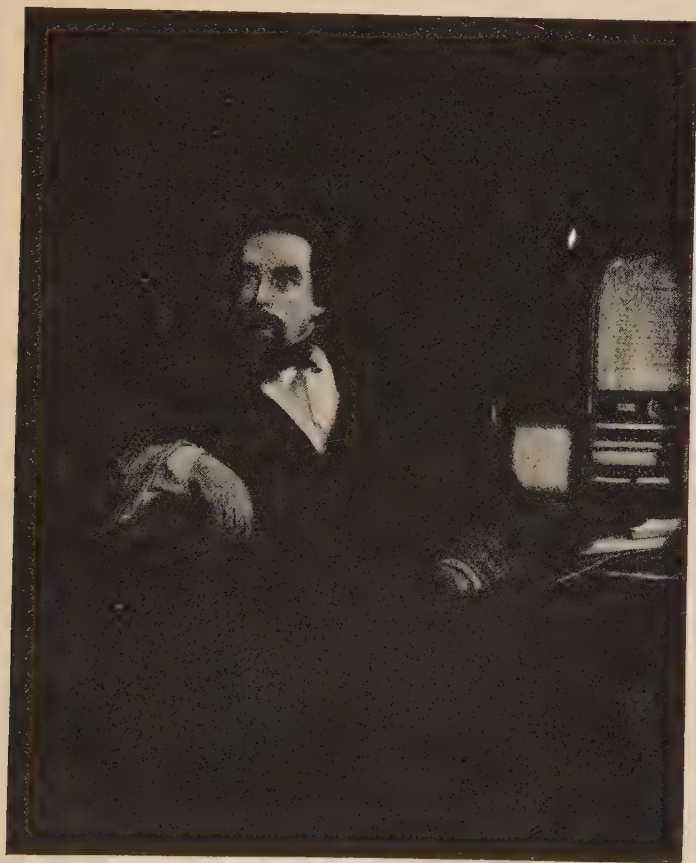
*(This lamp was erected in the Strand just
before the middle of the 19th century)*

worthless teachers and to make sure that the children had some sort of desks and books. Part of the government payment was made to depend upon reports about the school, and the best of the pupil-teachers were offered scholarships to take them to training colleges.

In the year 1837, while all the changes we have been speaking of were still new, there began the reign of Queen Victoria, which lasted until the end of the century. People

have a habit of speaking of "the Victorian period," but the whole time from 1837 to 1900 is too long and saw too many changes to be very well described by one name. At the beginning of it, though Great Britain had progressed since Waterloo, it was still a very different country from the one we see in 1918. Several railways

had been opened, but they were still considered an exciting novelty. The population of London was growing



Charles Dickens
(1812-1870)

fast, but Westbourne Grove and Earl's Court were still country districts, Clapham was a village, and Kentish Town a pleasant outer suburb. Omnibuses, usually

drawn by three horses, had plied in the streets of big towns for seven or eight years ; but cabs, with big wheels and a high seat at the back for the driver, had only just been patented by a man named Hansom. Country people were much less cut off, owing to the good roads and the new railways, than they had been twenty years earlier. But it still cost anything from fourpence to one and eightpence to send a letter from London to different parts of the country, so none but rich people could really get much news of one another in that way. Health and comfort, moreover, were still, according to our ideas, very little understood. There was not a single public bath or wash-house in 1837, and hardly any bath-rooms in private houses, while drainage and street cleaning were neglected. Gas-lighting indoors was still thought so dangerous that when it was first tried in the newly-built House of Commons "they had fire-engines in attendance, and a hose laid along every gas-pipe for fear of accidents. But," as an observer wrote at the time, "they will not venture to try it again."

The novels of Charles Dickens, which began to appear just about this time, give a very vivid impression of what England was like in the earlier half of the nineteenth century. In some of his books he aimed at making known certain evils about which he was very indignant, such as the state of workhouses and the practice of putting people in prison until they could pay their debts. But, apart from this, and apart, also, from the main interest of Dickens's stories and characters, we get from him an interesting picture of our country at a period when new inventions were just about to transform it.

IV. THE NEW MEANS OF TRANSPORT

Railways

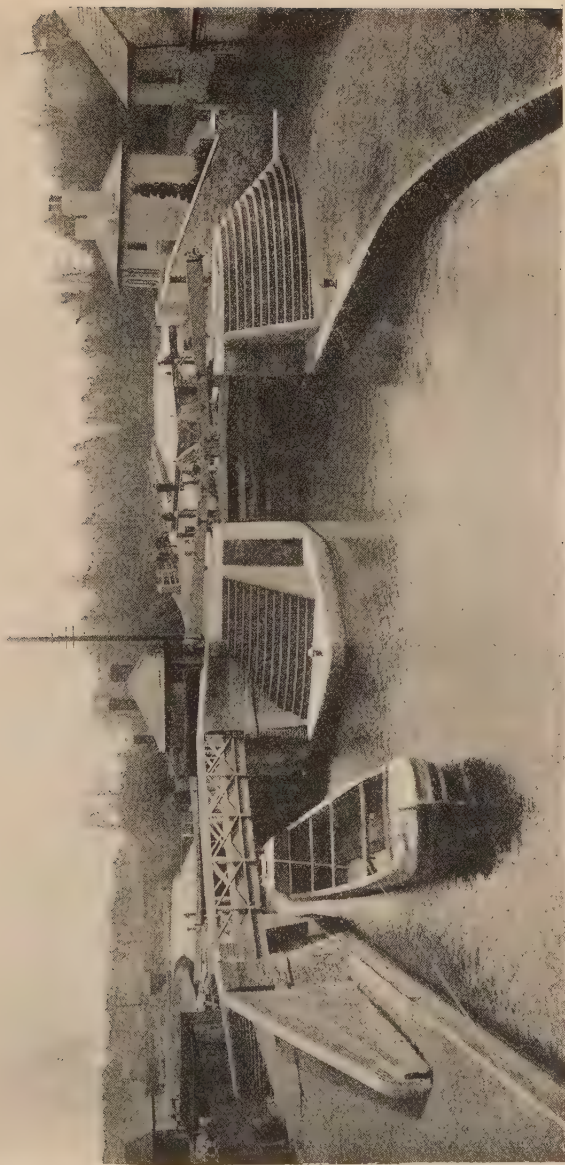
As any of us can see when we look at a railway train, there are two ideas which have been combined in making it the wonderful invention it is. One of them is the idea of having rails for the wheels to run on smoothly and easily, instead of rolling over the uneven ground. The other is the idea of the locomotive, or engine worked by steam, to pull the train along. Though it is only by bringing the two things together that the great speed of our railway trains can be attained, there are ways of using a locomotive without rails, or rails without a locomotive; a traction engine at work shows us one, and a horse-tram the other. And, as a matter of fact, the two ideas did come up separately, although the advantage of combining them was recognised very soon.

Rails came first, as we should naturally suppose. So far back as the year 1676, the men who were then just beginning to do coal-mining near Newcastle used to send their coal down to the river by the help of this device. A letter written at that time says: "The manner of the carriage is by laying rails of timber from the colliery down to the river, exactly straight and parallel; and bulky carts are made with four rowlets fitting these rails, whereby the carriage is so easy, that one horse will draw four or five chaldrons of coals, and this is of immense benefit to the coal merchants." Other colliers must

have adopted the plan of the Newcastle men, for, during the eighteenth century, wooden rails were used near a good many mines in the Midlands and the North, and also in South Wales. People did not see that such things need be used for moving any but the heaviest goods, and certainly not for conveying passengers, but they saw the advantage of rails when horses had to drag loads of coal or iron.

The next step was to replace the wooden rails by iron ones; and this was really begun more by accident than anything else. At a place named Coalbrookdale, where there were iron foundries, it was determined, once when trade was slack, to have iron plates made to lay on the top of the wooden rails. The owners thought that this would make a specially smooth surface for the heavy wheeled carts to run on, but their chief idea was to give employment to the iron-founders. However, when metal rails had been tried they were found to be such a success that colliery-owners began to lay them in several other places. There were soon three "iron tramways" in Derbyshire, and some very long ones in South Wales. The word "tram" had by this time come into regular use; it was probably adopted because a Mr "Outram" did a great deal of work in connection with the new lines, and his name, shortened to one syllable, was used to describe them.

It is said that the Duke of Bridgewater, who had been one of the first to see the value of canals, was also well aware of the possibilities of this new method of transport. "You must be making handsomely out of your canals," somebody once remarked to him. "Oh, yes, they will last my time," replied the Duke, "but I don't like the look of these tram-roads—there's mischief in them."



The canal at Rickmansworth

(Note the different levels of the water, and the "locks" by means of which the barges are transferred from one level to another.

Note also, on the towing-path in the middle of the picture, the horses that draw the barges by long tow-lines)

This was to be proved true in the future, when the canals lay neglected and practically all goods were sent about by the railway. But it was a clever prophecy to make then, for very few people perceived so early what great things could be done with rails. About the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, other observers began to watch the progress made with them, and to picture the possible results of spreading them all over the country. In 1801, a tramway for general merchandise was made between Wandsworth and Croydon, and an experiment was tried to see how heavy a load a horse could pull on it without being fatigued. Soon after this some one suggested that a line should be made between London and Bath. And it is related that a thoughtful man in the north of England, after watching coal-trucks going to and fro in a neighbouring pit, turned to the engineer and asked why iron rails were not laid all over England, and steam-power used to pull carriages about on them.

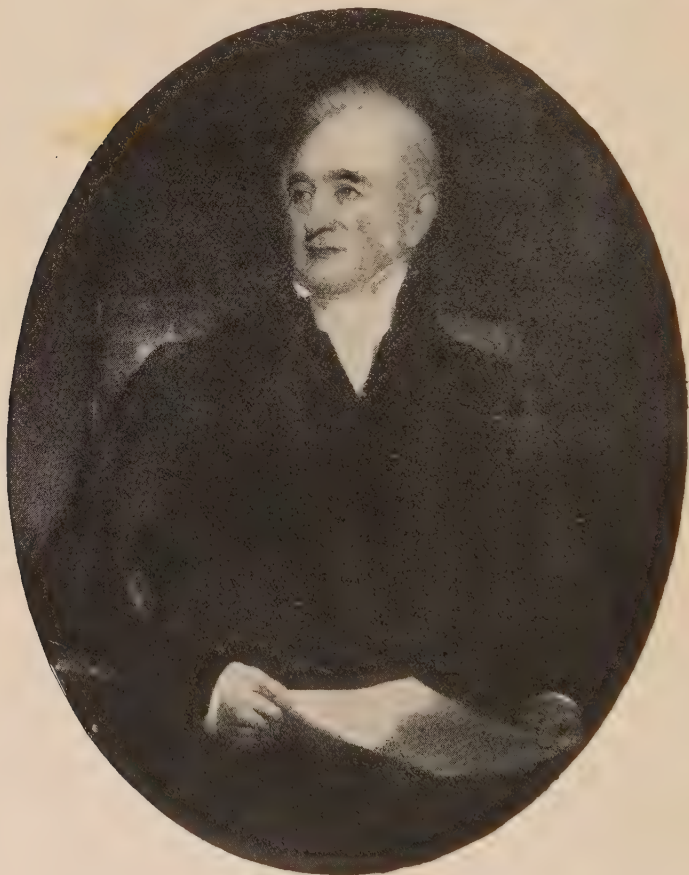
However, as often happens, suggestions of this kind were made a good many times before anything further was done, and then it was the pressure of necessity more than the attraction of the idea which made people take the matter seriously. All canal proprietors were not so far-seeing as the Duke of Bridgewater; they thought the country could not get on without canals, and so they made high charges for the use of them, and did not trouble even to keep them in good order. The annoyance of this was especially felt in the coal districts of the North, and it brought up again an old plan for making a rail or tramway between Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees. This had been talked of even before the Napoleonic War, but Darlington people had waited for Stockton to begin, and Stockton people for Darling-

ton, until the outbreak of war had occupied everybody's thoughts, and their money too, in other ways.

The man who had most to do with actually launching the enterprise was Edward Pease, a well-known Quaker. At the age of fifty he had largely withdrawn from his business as a wool merchant, and turned his attention to the railway question. As Darlington was his home he was naturally interested in the plan for having a line there, and what he felt sure would be a good thing was to have a public line for everybody's use, and to form a company to own and manage it. The lines before this had been privately owned by colliery proprietors or other people, and laid on their own land. Of course, it was a different matter to make a line which would have to cross the property of all sorts of people, and which anyone paying a fare was to have the right to use. For this, it was necessary to have an Act passed by Parliament and to raise a great deal of money. Both these things were done by Edward Pease, in spite of the strongest objections made by people of influence in the neighbourhood. He was helped, however, by his friends, well-to-do men who were members of the Society of Friends, so that for a long time this first public railway was known as "the Quakers' line."

While this part of the work was going on, people still supposed that when the line was complete the trucks would be drawn along it by horses. The supporters of it declared that "our horse shall carry eight tons at the speed that your horse can carry one." One of the opponents said mockingly in reply that he would "eat all the coals that your railroad will carry." But, in the year 1821 something happened which made a great difference to the early work of the Stockton and Darlington

line. Edward Pease was sitting one day in his study when he was told that two strangers wished to see him. He first replied that he was too busy, but then, luckily



George Stephenson
(1781-1848)

changing his mind, went down to see who they were. One of them was George Stephenson, the inventor of the locomotive.

Stephenson was the son of a collier, and was born in a cottage at the village of Wylam, near Newcastle. The family was poor, and George must have been sent to work very early; for it is said that when he was employed, at twopence a day, in picking dross out of coal-heaps, he used to hide, when the overseer came by, for fear he should be thought too little to earn his wages. After he had grown up he became a stoker to an engine, and earned a shilling a day; and when this was doubled he declared that he was "a man for life." As time passed Stephenson added all sorts of other pursuits to his ordinary work. He made shoes and clothes, gave lessons and was always trying his hand at inventing machinery. His employers were so much struck by Stephenson's ability and industry that they lent him the money to make his first locomotive, which was tried on a tramway so early as 1814. At the time when he went to see Edward Pease he was about forty years old; in describing him afterwards Pease wrote, "There was an honest, sensible look about George Stephenson, and he seemed so modest and unpretending." He knew the value of his invention very well, however, and told Pease that the locomotive he had made for use on the pit railway was worth fifty horses. "Come over to Killingworth, and see what my Blotcher can do," he said. "Seeing is believing, sir!" Pease was very ready to do so, and having watched the locomotive at work, was a firm believer in it ever afterwards.

Indeed, curious as this early engine would appear to us nowadays, those seeing it in motion for the first time were naturally amazed. It was a wonderful thing that the force of steam should turn the wheels of an engine and drive it along with heavy trucks of coal behind. The

Stockton and Darlington line was actually opened in 1825, and caused great excitement in the neighbourhood. The starting-place was surrounded by crowds of people, some rather alarmed, some delighted, but all ready to cheer the opening of such an enterprise. At the appointed hour the train moved off at a pace of between ten and twelve miles an hour, with a horseman riding in front of it. The engine was driven by George Stephenson himself, and besides many coal-wagons there was one



Locomotive No. 1

(Ran on the Stockton and Darlington Railway)

passenger-coach, carrying the directors and proprietors. Pease wrote afterwards a description of the scene. "Many of the people tried to accompany the train by running, and some gentlemen on horseback galloped across the fields to keep up with the engine. The railway descending with a gentle incline towards Darlington, the rate of speed was consequently variable. At a favourable part of the road, Stephenson determined to try the speed of the engine, and he called upon the horseman with the flag to

get out of the way.” The speed was then increased to as much as fifteen miles an hour, so that the runners and the horsemen were both left behind. Trains nowadays can go fifty or sixty miles an hour, but fifteen seemed a great deal to those who watched Stephenson. The trial was thus an immense success.

The owners of this first public railway line had really expected to carry only goods as a regular thing. But from the very first, passengers insisted on travelling by the train also, so, within a few months, a passenger coach, called “The Experiment,” was announced to run every day except Sunday between Stockton and Darlington. As the popularity and usefulness of the new scheme became evident other parts of the country thought that they would form companies and build lines too, and there was a great struggle in Parliament on the question of leave being given to make the Liverpool and Manchester railway. When that was won a competition was held to decide which engine should be used on the new line, for several kinds of locomotives were now in existence. One called the “Sanspareil” was much approved by some people, and although it failed in this competition, it was bought by another company. But as this engine was so constructed that the driver had to stand out on the buffer-plank in front, it must certainly have had great disadvantages. Stephenson’s “Rocket” was the one finally chosen for the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, and he was made engineer to the company. The opening of this railway took place in 1830, in the presence of a number of well-known people; the Duke of Wellington, Peel and Huskisson were to travel in the first train. The scene was very gay, with bands playing and flags flying. But most unhappily an accident

spoiled everybody's pleasure on the occasion; for Huskisson, while walking across the line, was knocked down and killed.

The Liverpool and Manchester railway naturally progressed faster than the Stockton and Darlington had done, since there were more people to travel by it and



George Stephenson's "Rocket" beside a London and North Western Railway Co.'s express passenger-engine

more goods to send. Within a week there were six trains running on it every day, and on one occasion in 1831 an engine drew a load of 164 tons from Liverpool to Manchester in two hours and a half. Instead of thirty stage-coaches running between the two towns, there was soon only one left; and instead of 500 passengers

there were 1600. When all this happened, some of the people who had refused to believe in the future of railways must have begun to feel foolish. In the light of what we know has taken place since, it is curious to read some of the opinions expressed at the time. One writer, indeed, who was in favour of railway enterprise, explained carefully that he thought it would do harm for people to expect too much, and that it was ridiculous to expect engines ever to travel at the rate of sixteen or eighteen miles an hour. An article which appeared in *The Quarterly Review* was much more severe. "As to those persons," it said, "who speculate on making railways generally throughout the kingdom, and superseding all the canals, all the waggons, mails, and stage-coaches, post-chaises, and, in short, every other mode of conveyance, by land and by water, we deem them and their visionary schemes unworthy of notice. The gross exaggeration of the powers of the locomotive steam-engine (or, to speak in plain English, the steam-carriage) may delude for a time, but must end in the mortification of those concerned. We should as soon expect the people to suffer themselves to be fired off upon one of Congreve's ricochet rockets, as trust themselves to the mercy of such a machine, going at such a speed."

However, when people saw what happened after the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester railway, most of them were ready to trust themselves to the machine, and many were eager to invest their money in building new lines, because they were sure that large profits would come from them. Several of the chief railways which are still in existence were begun in the ten years after 1830. The London to Birmingham line was the first long one, agreed to in Parliament after a great deal of

difficulty with the land-owners through whose property the cutting had to pass. Then came the Great Western, then the South-eastern and the London and Brighton: the Great Northern followed some years later, and the Midland later still. The objections to railways went on, but they took a different form as time went by. Instead of saying that the locomotive would be no use, people said that it would ruin the country. It was prophesied that the London and Birmingham line would "create chasms and upheave mountains like an earthquake," that farming would be stopped, that springs would be dried up and meadows become barren. In fact, the idea of letting the line pass through Northampton, as had been intended at first, was given up because the inhabitants objected. They were afraid that the wool of the sheep grazing in their meadows would be dirtied by the smoke of the trains. As the result of this, a large tunnel had to be made, at the cost of hundreds of thousands of pounds, so as to take the line another way.

Northampton was not the only place which refused to have a railway near it. When the Bill for the Great Western railway was being brought forward in Parliament, both Eton and Oxford used all the influence they had to prevent the line from coming their way. They succeeded in having it taken through Slough and Didcot instead, and were very much pleased. But, of course, as time went by, all the townspeople found the inconvenience of not having a railway when many other towns had, and lines were extended to include them. Very often when a place is now on a branch line and has a very bad service of trains, this is because in the first half of the nineteenth century its people had a prejudice against railways. And, as a rule, their descendants wish that

they had been more open-minded; because though something might be said for having no railway trains at all, there is very little in favour of having slow and unpunctual ones. This does not often happen with important towns like Oxford and Northampton, but with smaller ones it very well may.

Another instance of mistaken views about the future



The Etheron Viaduct

(The arches and the rest of the structure between the stone piers were built of timber)

of railways came up when the Great Western was being made. Shortly before, there had been a good deal of discussion about the best width or gauge for the line; and a friend of George Stephenson, who was engaged upon the Canterbury and Whitstable railway, came to him to ask what width he thought the right one. "Make it the same width as mine," replied Stephenson.

“Though they may be a long way apart now, depend upon it, they will be joined together some day.” The friend had confidence enough in Stephenson to accept this, and he made his line 4 ft. 8½ in. wide, like the Liverpool and Manchester. Clearly this was a matter of great importance, since the same train could not possibly run on two lines of different widths; and if railways ever did join, passengers and goods would always have to be shifted from one train to another unless the same gauge had been used. But the engineer and directors of the Great Western line did not see the force of this, or believe that traffic would ever run in any great quantity from other lines to theirs. They said that the part of England served by the Great Western was much cut off from the rest, and that there would be hardly any shifting of goods at all. So the line was built with the broad gauge of 7 feet which the engineer, Brunel, declared to be much better. People old enough to have been on this broad line say that the trains ran so smoothly on it as to make travelling extremely comfortable. But this was probably the only advantage it had, and from what we know of Brunel, the engineer, it seems as if he preferred it largely for the sake of being different from other people. All other lines have their sleepers laid cross-ways, but Brunel was sure it would be better to lay them parallel with the rails. The other lines, again, had up-stations and down-stations on opposite sides, and the people crossed over to them; but in the early days of the Great Western the stations were on one side only, and the trains crossed over instead of the passengers. However, the other differences were a small matter compared with the difference in width. In the year 1846 an Act of Parliament was passed fixing Stephenson’s narrow gauge

as the one to be used in all future railways. As the trade and traffic of the country increased, which it did with extraordinary speed all through the century, the Great Western directors discovered the inconvenience of having a line unlike everybody else's, and gradually replaced their broad gauge with the narrow. In 1892 the last stretch of the wide line was done away with, so that express trains were able to run, as they do now, straight from Plymouth to Glasgow, or from Birkenhead to Bournemouth.

The prosperity of the new railways was checked once or twice by sudden alarms about them, which arose from people being in too great a hurry to invest their money. If almost every one who wants to make a fortune is trying to make it very quickly in the same way, there usually comes a moment when they suddenly lose confidence, and want their money back. This causes great disturbance for a time, throws many men out of work, and ruins some. But these "railway panics" did not seriously delay the progress of the wonderful new means of transport. The difference it made to trade of every kind was so great that no obstacles seemed to daunt the promoters of railways.

The actual laying of the line is not an easy matter. We are quite accustomed now to the sight of deep cuttings and high embankments, bridges which carry the line across rivers, tunnels which take it through a great hill-side. But at first these must have seemed tremendous undertakings. The early railway surveyors had to find out exactly how much slope, up or down, it was safe to have on their lines; they had to choose a place where it was possible to skirt a hill-side, and where tunnelling would have to begin. Then the cuttings have

to be differently shaped according to the kind of soil in which they are to be made. If it is clay the sides must be gently sloped; if it is rock they can be almost as straight as house walls; if it is chalk they may sometimes be one, sometimes the other, and yet be made safe. Again, when the line has to follow a winding course, engineers must settle how sharp a curve their train may



Stephenson's railway bridge

(Seen from Berwick, Halidon Hill in the background. A recent picture)

take without fear of accidents. Perhaps mountain and boggy ground are amongst the worst difficulties surveyors have to face. It is said that when a line was planned to go through Westmorland, the first man who looked over the ground came back and declared that the thing was impossible. However, a local surveyor went carefully into it, and succeeded in making a plan by which the line

could be taken right up to Scotland, with only one serious difficulty to surmount, the climb over the moors by Shap.

To run a railway across boggy land appeared at first to be one of the most difficult tasks that could be undertaken. But at Chat Moss, on the Liverpool and Manchester line, Stephenson found out a very good way of putting a layer of dry moss and laying hurdles upon it to support the embankment. For some time these dry materials went on sinking into the bog, but at last the surface was made firm, and that stretch of line became a great success. Some of the tunnels which were considered great feats of engineering are the Box tunnel, between Chippenham and Bath, which is more than three thousand yards long; the one near Ledbury station in the Malvern country, which is the deepest in England; and the Standedge tunnel, between Lancashire and Yorkshire, which was the longest. But the proposal which roused the greatest wonder at the time was that for a whole underground railway beneath London. This was not attempted till the second half of the century; it is very familiar now to all who live there, but we can easily imagine that at first it was a decidedly startling idea.

In the early days of railways the comfort of passengers was very little considered, and that of third-class passengers not considered at all. For some years many of the companies refused even to take third-class passengers, while others provided only open goods-wagons with movable seats, and charged at the rate of three halfpence a mile for travelling in them. As somebody wrote at the time, the third-class passenger "was conveyed with other unclean animals by cattle trains," he

was shunted about in his bufferless box for hours, and when at last he reached his destination, it was to see a notice that "the Company's servants are strictly ordered not to porter for wagon passengers." It was decided, however, by Parliament that this must be changed, and an Act was passed obliging the companies to run at least one train a day each way on every line, which should travel not less than twelve miles an hour and carry passengers in covered carriages at a rate of a penny a mile. This was the beginning of the great extension of third-class travel. Though they were very angry at first, the companies soon found that this part of their business was the most profitable of all, because of the large numbers of people who were encouraged to use the trains. The idea of limiting the third class to certain trains grew to be considered more and more old-fashioned, until at last it passed away altogether. But it is only within the present century that we have seen third-class carriages become what can be called really well-appointed. People who travelled in them during the later part of the nineteenth century were taken as fast as anybody else, but were shut up for long journeys in little separate compartments, unheated, badly lighted, and with narrow, poorly cushioned seats. To-day, however, the best lines provide for third-class passengers, as for the rest, corridor carriages, well warmed and lighted, having comfortable seats, and restaurant cars for meals.

It was unfortunate that almost all our railway companies, when they were first making their lines, had to waste enormous sums of money in buying land from the owners at very high prices, and in paying legal expenses connected with the necessary Acts of Parliament. To some

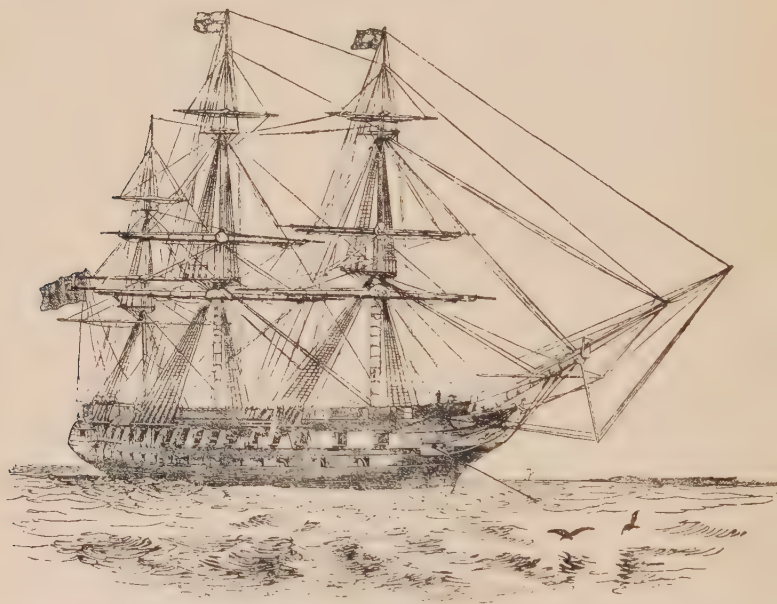
extent this has burdened them ever since. In all other ways their history has been one of prosperity, and, taking speed, safety and comfort together, British railways are almost certainly the best in Europe. Their growth has, perhaps, done more than anything else to change the life of our country. It has enabled towns to grow to the size which we see, because supplies of every kind can reach them quickly and regularly from the country and the coast. It has helped trade to develop enormously, population to increase, and the difference between town and country people largely to pass away.

Steamships

The idea of finding some power to drive boats, independently of their sails or oars, was by no means new at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Experiments had been made in the turning of the paddle-wheels by steam as much as a hundred years earlier, both in England and France; but until the invention of Watt's steam-engine no real success had been achieved. From that time, however, engineers in different countries made great efforts to apply the new force to boats and ships.

One very early attempt was made by an American named Fitch towards the end of the eighteenth century. His boats had oars placed upright at the sides, and moved round by steam, a plan which is, of course, the beginning of the paddle-wheel. But Fitch's engine did not work at all well, so the boat was only fit for use on rivers, and did not go fast even then. His friends regarded his experiments as made chiefly for amusement, although he himself is said to have had a clear idea of the future of steamships. The story is that when Fitch was

showing his work to two acquaintances he remarked, "Well, gentlemen, although I shall not live to see the time, you will—when steamboats will be preferred to all other means of conveyance, especially for passengers!" and that one visitor afterwards remarked to the other, "Poor fellow! What a pity he is crazy!"



The "Queen," East Indiaman

(Launched in 1842, was described as "a beautiful vessel of 1350 tons burden, built on the principle of a frigate, being pierced for fifty guns")

It is not at all surprising that the prophecy should have been thought a mad one, for sailing-ships were constantly used and steadily improved for fully fifty years after this. The steamship, even after it had been recognised as a success, did not replace the sailing-vessel in the same rapid way that railway trains replaced horse-

coaches. The difference in speed was not nearly so great, and the difference in the carrying capacity hardly anything. The great advantage, of course, which the steamship has besides its speed is its independence of the wind. In old days people who wanted to cross the sea might have to wait days or weeks for a favourable breeze, and if they were becalmed in the middle of the Atlantic or Pacific, might have to spend an extra month on their voyage. But, all the same, such fine vessels were being built up to nearly the middle of the nineteenth century, and the seamanship of their crews and captains was so good, that they held their own for a long time, especially in long ocean voyages in which the winds are fairly constant. So we must not picture steamers as coming into use everywhere at once, or be surprised to hear of sailing vessels even in quite recent times.

About the same time that Fitch was experimenting in the United States, two Scotsmen were getting on a good deal better with a little steamboat at home. One of them, a man named Miller, had made a little vessel with paddle-wheels, but these had to be turned by hand. So an engineer named Symington worked out a plan for applying steam-force to these paddles, and managed to drive the boat at a speed of five miles an hour. Afterwards Symington improved on his own invention, and made a boat intended for use on the Forth and Clyde canal; but as the canal proprietors greatly disliked the idea it never came to anything. American engineers meanwhile had profited by Symington's work, and were eagerly trying to develop it. One of them was the first to use the screw-propeller for a steamboat, and also to send the new vessels into the open sea. Symington himself was hampered for a time by the lack of any

wealthy person who believed in his ideas, and unluckily the enterprising Duke of Bridgewater, who ordered eight boats from him, died before the order could be carried out. In the meantime another Scot had built a little steamboat called *The Comet*, which was used on the river Clyde, but Symington is always held to have been the first really to solve the difficulties of the marine engine.

When the people both of Great Britain and America were busily making a new kind of ship, it was natural that before long somebody should try to send one across the Atlantic ocean. This was done first from the American side in 1819, when a little vessel, named the *Savannah*, after the place where she was built, came across to Liverpool, spending thirty-eight days on the voyage. But the *Savannah*, being very small, could not carry enough fuel with her to keep up steam for the whole crossing, so that for eleven or twelve days out of the thirty-eight she used sails. It was not for another twenty years that any ship crossed the Atlantic from port to port under steam alone. Then it was done by two ships, both British; the larger of the two, called the *Great Western*, went from Bristol to New York in thirteen days. When she came back to England, the *Great Western* brought sixty-eight cabin passengers, and 20,000 letters. As it happened, this very successful voyage took place quite shortly after a prominent American had said, "As well might they attempt a voyage to the moon, as to run regularly between England and New York."

Steamship companies soon began to be formed, and more vessels built for the passage to America. The owners of the *Great Western* sent out the first Atlantic

steamer having a screw instead of paddles; and the Transatlantic line began the traffic from Liverpool, which



The "Victory"
(*Nelson's flag-ship*)

has now grown to an enormous extent. The people who put their money into these companies must have had

some idea as to the great possibilities of Atlantic travel by steam. But if the owners of sailing-ships refused, as they probably did, to believe that their vessels would ever be displaced, there must have appeared to be a great deal of reason on their side. Fifteen days was still thought a wonderfully short time for the Atlantic voyage, and the best sailing-ships could do it nearly as fast. The discomforts of the journey were as bad on the one kind of vessel as on the other. Cabins were cramped and badly ventilated, and the present plan of keeping food fresh in cold storage had not been invented, so, after the first few days, passengers had to live mainly on salt meat and biscuits. In some ways it was even more unpleasant at sea in a steamship than under sail, for the smells were bad and the motion was rather more unpleasant. Thus, it may well have seemed doubtful in those early days whether people would ever think a steamer crossing worth the great extra expense.

But as time went by, various new inventions altered all this. The screw was perfected and found to be better than paddle-wheels; engines and boilers were constantly improved; then, from about the middle of the century, iron was used instead of wood, and, later still, steel instead of iron, for building the ships. They became so large and swift that the Atlantic could be crossed in six or seven days. Passengers had more air and more room, and could be supplied with fresh food for the whole voyage. For saloon travellers in our own days, indeed, the great liners have become like very comfortable floating hotels. And since the wonderful invention of wireless telegraphy has been added to the rest, news from land can reach the passengers every day of their journey.

Naturally enough, it was not only to America that steamships began to ply. If the Atlantic ocean could be successfully crossed, so could other seas, and companies were soon formed to trade with all parts of the world. The Royal Mail Steam Packet company, the Peninsular and Oriental, now usually spoken of as the P. and O., and the Cunard company, were amongst the earliest after the Transatlantic. But others sprang up almost year by year afterwards, and a glance at the shipping news in any morning paper will show us what an immense number of steamers are now constantly going to and from British ports. The advantage of steam over sails for passengers was, of course, felt most of all in long voyages to India and China, which in old days occupied several months. But, for carrying merchandise, sailing-ships held their own for a rather longer time, on account of their cheapness. Even a few years before 1870, some very fine sailing-vessels called "clippers" were trying hard to make ocean voyages at the same speed as steamers, and very nearly succeeded in doing it. But it was inevitable in the end for steamships to get most of the trade as well as all the passengers.

The Admiralty, as the authority which looks after our navy is called, had been rather unwilling to have their battleships driven by the new power. This was partly no doubt because our fleet had done such splendid work and become so famous under the old conditions that it seemed almost rash to make any change. However, between the years 1830 and 1840 the Admiralty became convinced that the new ideas must be taken up, and a few steamships were altered and built for the navy, all paddle-boats, and all built of wood. After this beginning, other changes were sure to come; iron

ships were slowly introduced against the will of some of the naval designers; and screw propellers took the place of paddle-wheels. Up to the middle of the century progress in these ways was very slow, but afterwards new inventions followed one another quickly until our battle-ships have become the masses of wonderful machinery they are now. The contrast in appearance between



H.M.S. Penelope

(A transformed sailing-vessel. A section was added in the middle to accommodate the boilers and engines)

Nelson's flag-ship of 1805 and a modern super-Dreadnought shows a greater change than had probably ever taken place since shipbuilding first began.

The use of steam for ocean travel has combined with its use on land to throw open the most distant parts of the world for trade with one another. Our nation is now regularly supplied with food in great quantities

from America, India, and Australia; and British manufactured goods go out to these places in return. The only other thing necessary for this system of world-trade was that goods imported into the country should no longer be taxed. A beginning had already been made in the fight against restrictions on commerce; but the great battle and the victory belong to the years just after the accession of Queen Victoria.

V. THE ABOLITION OF THE CORN LAWS

What the Corn Laws were

THE laws which prevented corn from being brought freely into Great Britain from abroad were not old ones surviving from early times. They had been made after the close of the Napoleonic War, and were quite frankly intended to keep the price of corn, and therefore of course of bread, nearly as high as it had been during the years of that great struggle. It was hardly possible to lay down that foreign supplies should never come in at all; because clearly if our own harvests were very scanty we should have to fall back on imports or else run the risk of a famine. But the rule was that until British corn reached a certain very high price, seventy shillings a quarter, none should be admitted from abroad. Then when it did come, a tax had to be paid upon it which raised the price to the home level. The result of this was that the farmers made a splendid living, landlords got high rents, but everybody else suffered from having to pay so much for their bread and their flour.

This was not done from any deliberate intention of injuring the poor. Both landlords and farmers had grown accustomed to making large sums of money during the twenty years of war, and most of them firmly believed that they could not get on with less. They declared that if cheap foreign corn came into the country, much of our own land would have to be given up altogether. The price of the home-grown wheat would, of course, have to come down to the same level, or else nobody would buy it; and the farmers thought in that case it would not be worth their while to cultivate any but the very best land. This would throw a great many labourers out of work, ruin numbers of small farmers and also make our people so dependent on foreign countries for their food that in time of war they would run the risk of being starved.

There was some truth in all this; and nobody can deny that since Free Trade was established and steamships invented, farmers and their landlords are less prosperous in this country than they used to be, while the population of a good many villages has fallen off. But the change in the law was necessary at the time all the same, partly on account of the industrial revolution, and the quick growth of the towns. Great Britain is a country with special advantages for manufacture, because her rich coal mines lie near both to the iron districts and to the sea-board; the damp climate of our north-western counties, moreover, is particularly suited to the processes of cotton-spinning. So it would have been a great waste if we had not developed into what is called a great industrial nation. And if this was to happen, we were certainly bound to make use of the supply of food we could get from larger and less densely

populated countries. Our growing number of factory hands needed what foreigners could supply, and moreover it paid us well to exchange for their corn the manufactured articles which we could turn out rapidly.

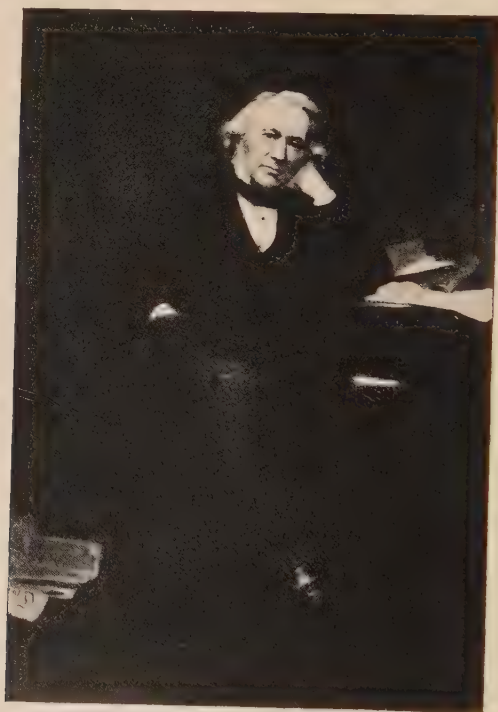
In view of this it is not surprising that a very strong feeling against the Corn Laws grew up amongst English manufacturers, and that it was a number of these men who first banded themselves together to try and get them abolished. But although factory-owners did this quite frankly for their own sake, and for the sake of their workmen, they soon came to believe that practically the whole nation would benefit if the law could be changed. As we know already, the labourers in the country were not getting much out of the prosperity of farming; on the contrary, their wages were low while their food was dear. The Anti-Corn-Law League, as the society of Lancashire men was called, soon found this out, and although their chief interest lay in town life, it is certain that they worked all the harder for the belief that they were aiming at everybody's good. The League was formed just at the beginning of those years about 1840, which were so specially hard for the poor that they have been called "the hungry forties."

The Work of Cobden and Bright

The most famous member of the Anti-Corn-Law League was Richard Cobden. He was not a Lancashire man by birth, but from the time when he took up the cotton business in Manchester he became deeply interested in it and much attracted by the life of the northern counties. He liked the energy of the people, and found that he understood them; for his own character was very

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determined and ambitious. "I know I must rise rapidly if not too heavily weighted," he wrote in a letter to his brother, while he was quite a young man. But, at the same time, Cobden could hardly tell why he was so



Richard Cobden
(1804-1865)

desperately anxious to get on, for he had no real reason to make money. "I do not think the possession of millions would greatly alter my habits of expense," he said about the same time. He thoroughly enjoyed doing good work for its own sake, and thought it natural that

other people should ; and this helped to make him very confident about the results of taking away all restrictions on trade. His belief was that if Great Britain removed all taxes on imported goods, every other country would soon do the same ; then each nation would work at what it could do the best, and exchange its goods freely for those of other countries.

These hopes of free trade everywhere have never been fulfilled, and the members of the League had to spend several years in hard work before they got our own Corn Laws repealed. When a number of them first went to London on their business, a nobleman visiting them at their quiet little hotel said very gravely that they were as likely to get the monarchy overturned as to succeed in their object. And, indeed, it seemed at first as though what he said might be true, for the House of Commons began by simply refusing to enquire into the matter at all, or to hear what the League had to say. As its members were representatives of great numbers of people who had sent petitions to Parliament against the Corn Laws, they were angry at this as well as disheartened. But Cobden urged them not to be discouraged, and reminded them that all great changes had to be brought about by making the mass of sensible people see that they were necessary. What the League had to do now was to send lecturers all over Great Britain to make it clear why the Corn Laws ought to be repealed.

The lecturers were sent out, not only into the towns but into the villages, and they learned a great deal as well as taught something. They found out, in the first place, what the state of things amongst the labourers really was. In Devonshire and Somersetshire there were men earning from seven to nine shillings a week to keep

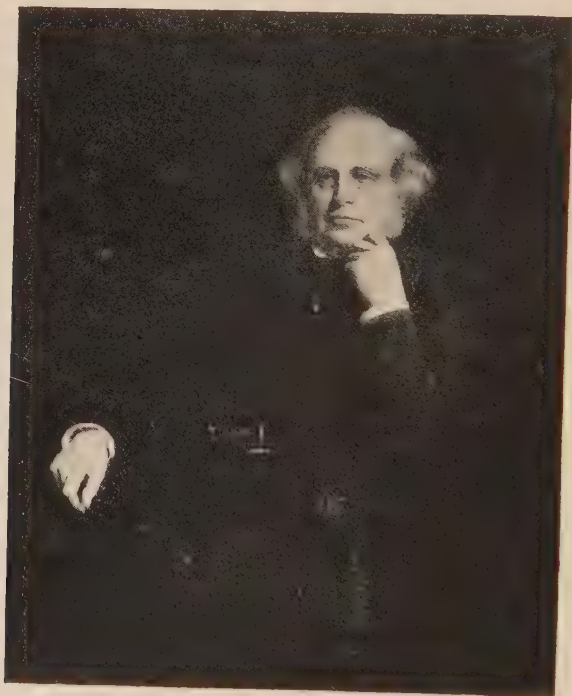
themselves and a family, when bread alone cost them four and sixpence. In most parts of the country they had to get on almost entirely without meat or milk, and in some they lived mainly on potatoes and barley. But, in spite of this, and of the fact that the Anti-Corn-Law League hoped to change it all for the better, the lecturers found out, also, how hard their task was going to be. Not only the landlords but plenty of other people besides, believed firmly that these "Manchester men" were arguing for something which would ruin England. At Petersfield they were turned out of the inn; at Louth they had to speak from a cart; at Newark and Retford nobody would lend them a room. There were other places where they were actually mobbed in the streets. In the newspapers, articles appeared abusing the leaders and saying that if they wanted to eat foreign corn they ought to live abroad and do it; and even in big towns like Birmingham they were freely accused of agitating against the Corn Laws out of the purest selfishness.

Though this work through the country was useful in its way, the Free Traders soon saw that they ought to have some one to represent them in the House of Commons itself, and Cobden was thought the best man to do it. Indeed his very first speech in Parliament is said to have made a deep impression. Instead of talking about what ought to happen or might happen, he spoke of the actual facts which he knew, and with striking vigour and clearness. When he told the House that while in a great nobleman's household the tax on bread amounted to no more than a halfpenny on every hundred pounds, with a labourer it came to about the fifth of his income; when he described the misery he had seen amongst the poor of the towns, Cobden left, as was said afterwards,

“a sting in the minds of his hearers.” However, he knew quite well that there was a great difference between making an impression in the House of Commons and really persuading the government to do anything about the Corn Laws. “Stanley scowls and Peel smiles at me, both meaning mischief,” he wrote to his brother afterwards. Sir Robert Peel was Prime Minister at this time, and nobody was quite certain as yet what he really believed about Free Trade; but at any rate it was not in the least likely that he meant to make any change unless he was obliged.

Shortly after this, Cobden made a close friendship which turned out to be very important in the interests of the Anti-Corn-Law League. It was with John Bright, also a Lancashire manufacturer, who proved himself a wonderfully eloquent speaker. The story is told that in the autumn of the year 1841 Cobden came to see Bright, who was in deep distress about the death of his wife. After expressing his sympathy and sorrow, Cobden said: “There are thousands of houses in England at this moment where wives, mothers and children are dying of hunger. When the first paroxysm of your grief is past, I would advise you to come with me, and we will never rest until the Corn Law is repealed.” Bright, in relating this afterwards, added that for five years after he accepted Cobden’s invitation, they devoted themselves almost entirely to this great question. Every working hour was given to it, and all the powers of these two determined men. So, although they had not been the first to move in the matter, and although they both lived to do many other things besides, their names are always remembered first and foremost in connection with the repeal of the Corn Laws. When John Bright many

years afterwards addressed meetings on the subjects of that time, old countrymen amongst his audience were sometimes seen to weep as they listened to his voice. It reminded them so vividly of the days when their chance of having food enough for their children seemed



John Bright
(1811-1889)

to depend on his power to persuade the rulers of the nation.

Cobden and Bright worked admirably together because each had something which the other had not. While Bright had this wonderful earnestness and could move

his hearers deeply, Cobden was quick and clear and always ready. He had endless patience, both in studying the facts for himself, and in explaining them to other people; and he was never tired of repeating a thing so long as it was really necessary. Then he had other qualities of different kinds which were very useful to him in this long struggle. One was that he could always throw off his anxieties and rest when he had a chance. Another was that he could argue and persuade people without annoying them. Indeed, it is said that in the whole period of the Anti-Corn-Law League he never made a single personal enemy; and considering how much of his time was spent in attacking the opinions and interests of one set of people, and in urging another set to take action and to spend money, this is a strong proof of his lovable character. As he said himself, he "lived in public meetings"; and huge petitions to Parliament had to be arranged, new facts about the state of things collected, and the stir constantly kept up for fear that the government should suppose the attack on the Corn Laws to be weakening.

The ministers at this time were not like the old Tories of the first years after Waterloo, whose chief idea had been to keep down the people for fear of revolution. Sir Robert Peel and those who supported him had just adopted the name "Conservative," meaning that they believed in maintaining the system of government very much as it was, but were not against freedom and progress. Indeed, in the few years after 1841, Peel passed several laws for improving the condition of the people. This was the time of the Mines Act and of one of the Factory Acts for which Lord Shaftesbury had worked hard. Besides that, Peel had shown that he himself approved

free trade to some extent. He went into the question of the duties paid upon goods, other than corn, brought into the country from abroad; and actually reduced the amount of the tax on as many as 750 articles in regular use, from cattle and eggs to hemp and timber. This naturally lessened the hardships of a great many people, and in a sense made it easier for the Prime Minister to leave the question of corn alone.

Probably the fact was that Peel felt convinced in his own mind that the Corn Laws ought to be abolished, but knew how bitterly he would offend a great many of his own supporters if he led the way in doing it. Besides the more open-minded men who were in the Cabinet with him, Peel had to consider also a good many ordinary members of Parliament who simply could not bear the thought of this change. It is said that in 1845, when Cobden made one of his best speeches in the House of Commons, some of the men on the Conservative side whispered eagerly to one another "Peel must answer this." But as Cobden came to an end, the Prime Minister crumpled up the notes he had been taking, and said drily to his neighbour, "Those may answer him who can."

The Irish Famine and the Repeal

In the autumn of the same year a terrible misfortune took place in Ireland, which had the effect of bringing about the repeal of the Corn Laws more promptly than any arguments could have done. This was the failure of the potato crop, resulting in the most appalling misery and famine. In any other country the loss of a single crop would have been nothing more than a serious

inconvenience, since the people would have been able to find other food instead. But the Irish peasants had most unhappily come to depend almost entirely on potatoes for their support. The number of people in the country had increased very quickly of late years, but there were neither manufacturers to give them employment and wages, nor improved ways of farming to help them to get more from the land. Instead of that, farms had been divided up again and again, until all over Ireland there were families trying to find a wretched living on a small patch of ground where potatoes were grown. If the men had not come over to England to earn money at harvest-time, many of these families would hardly have been able to live at all.

It is easy to imagine what a dreadful blow it was for these peasants to find that blight had attacked potatoes over the whole country. The effect was so sudden that people were beginning to starve almost before the news was understood in England, and long before the government had grasped the full extent of the disaster. Illness followed hunger in Ireland; work-houses were crammed; and any small attempts at relief made by charitable people seemed useless against such misery. When the British government and nation really understood what was going on, they roused themselves to help. Food and money were poured into Ireland; soup-kitchens were set up, young men were encouraged to leave the country for America. But in a sense all these efforts came too late. No doubt many people were saved by them, but great numbers had already died of actual starvation.

Sir Robert Peel was deeply impressed by the sufferings

of the Irish, all the more, no doubt, because his government had not been prompt enough in trying to relieve them. He decided that when there were masses of people living in our islands who might easily sink into want, it was wrong that the law should keep out foreign supplies of food. He first suggested that the tax should be lowered for the next three years, and then be removed altogether. But he soon saw that while this proposal was quite enough to set the determined Tories or Protectionists against him, he would win the eager support of Cobden, Bright and all the Liberals if he decided to repeal the Corn Laws at one stroke. The vote in favour of this was carried in the House of Commons in May, 1846; but only about a third of Peel's own Conservative party supported him; the majority was made up by the Whigs or Liberals. Very shortly afterwards, Peel had to resign his office, and he was never Prime Minister again. His enemies reproached him bitterly for having broken up the Conservative party; and this, indeed, he had done, for those who were against Free Trade chose a new leader named Disraeli. But Sir Robert Peel had sacrificed his position for what he believed to be right. He knew, he said in his last speech as Prime Minister, that his name would be remembered with anger by those who had wanted the protection of the Corn Laws for selfish reasons. "But it may be," he went on, "that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of good-will in the abodes of those whose lot is to labour and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brows, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, all the sweeter because no longer leavened with a sense of injustice."

A month or two after this, the Anti-Corn-Law League

was broken up. Cobden and Bright were able to feel that their great struggle was over. There were other questions later in which both of them, Bright especially, were keenly interested; but free trade in almost everything was practically decided upon when the Corn Laws were repealed. Within the next fifteen years the remaining duties on imported goods were taken off, and our people were able to draw on the whole world for their food and for the materials of manufacturers. The curious thing was that after everything that had been said about the ruin of agriculture, for thirty years it went on growing more prosperous instead of less. Trade flourished, manufactures grew and the people not only increased in number, but, having more money to spend, they ate a great deal more, especially of bread, now much cheaper, and of meat. The result was that farmers sold their wheat and their stock in much greater quantities, and paid the high rents quite cheerfully. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century this state of things, however, passed away. More and more supplies poured into Great Britain from all parts of the world; and as our nation, being now well fed, could not go on steadily increasing its demand for corn, the value of farm-land at home fell to a considerable extent.

The great relief from hardship brought about by the Repeal had come at a very fortunate time. In the years 1847 and 1848, what was known as the "Chartist" agitation was still going on, and there happened, also, to be an attempt at a rising in Ireland. But the influence of the Chartists was much lessened now that the law no longer prevented a poor man from getting the food he needed. Some of the leaders had declared their intention of forcing their way into the House of Commons with an

immense petition; but when this was forbidden, and great numbers of special constables called out, Chartists found that they had not enough support amongst the people, and decided to go home, sending their petition to Westminster in three cabs. In Ireland, the peasantry had good reason for discontent, but fighting was no cure for their troubles, so it was a good thing that the rebellion of a few of them came to nothing. Altogether the British government had reason to think itself lucky since, in almost every other country in Europe, there were just at this time violent disturbances, if not actual revolutions.

The trouble began in France under the king, named Louis Philippe, who had been chosen as an improvement on the old Bourbon family. During his reign of eighteen years this monarch appeared to have forgotten that he was expected to rule according to the wishes of the people, and he busied himself in oppressing a party which wanted the poorer classes to have votes. Moreover, he managed so badly that reformers were gradually irritated into raising riots in Paris; and, finally, instead of trying to mend matters, Louis Philippe fled from the country in disguise. The French then decided to have another republic; but there was street fighting again in Paris before another four months were over, so a president was elected in the hope that he would keep peace and order. For this purpose, however, the French did not make a very wise choice. The president was Louis Napoleon, nephew of the great emperor Napoleon, and a man who was not in the least likely to settle down and govern a country quietly. From the beginning he tried to get all the power into his own hands, and about three years after his election managed to get himself declared

emperor instead of president. In this position he was destined to make some trouble for other countries, and a very great deal for his own.

In the meantime, the other European nations seemed, as it were, to take fire from the French revolutionaries of 1848. In northern Italy, the people were against the rule of Austria. Ever since the settlement of 1815, the Austrians had held a large part of Italy; but it was difficult to see what right they had to do so, and, moreover, they governed the provinces very badly. Unfortunately, however, the Italians were not closely enough united amongst themselves to fight successfully against such a strong power as Austria was then. The country was divided into small states, and the princes of these were afraid of losing their own power, and did not really want the northern Italians to win. Louis Napoleon, moreover, sent a French army to help the Austrians against the people of Rome. The Italians were crushed for the time, but it was certain now that they would never rest content without their freedom. An English statesman remarked that "opinions may in the end prove stronger than armies," and in time this was shown to be true.

Just as Austria got the French government to help her against the Italians, so she got Russia to help her in crushing the Hungarians. Under a leader named Kossuth the people of Hungary rose up against the bad government from which they had suffered; and, indeed, an attempt of the same sort was made by a party of the people in Austria itself. But strong armies put down both these rebellions, and Hungary had to wait some time longer for anything like the liberty she wanted.

Our own government was certainly not at this time everything that could be wished. We have seen already

how slow our statesmen sometimes were to do what clearly ought to have been done, how much depended upon able men who took up the cause of the weak, how long a powerful and selfish class was able to resist a change it disliked. But still the people knew that they were not disregarded. The management of affairs was largely within the control of men who would pay attention to popular feeling when they understood it. This, no doubt, was the chief reason why peace was practically unbroken in England while wars and revolutions were raging all over the rest of Europe.

It is surprising that, in 1848, our country escaped not only any serious disturbance at home but any grave quarrel with rulers abroad. Just at this time we had a very energetic foreign minister called Lord Palmerston. His great idea was to keep up the dignity and position of the British as against everybody else, and he was extremely fond of giving foreign governments good advice; he called this, "getting the affairs of Europe into trim," but it did not tend to make either him or the nation very popular on the Continent. Palmerston sympathised warmly with the Hungarians in their struggle against Austria, as, indeed, did a great many people in England; and he was delighted to be able to show this sympathy by standing up for Kossuth and the other leaders when they escaped into Turkey. Austria and Russia wished them to be given up, but Palmerston encouraged the Turks to refuse, and went so far as to send a British fleet to the mouth of the Dardanelles to show that we were ready to support the refusal. The emperor of Russia was specially annoyed at having to give way on this matter, because he and his advisers were anxious for a good excuse to attack Turkey. Lord

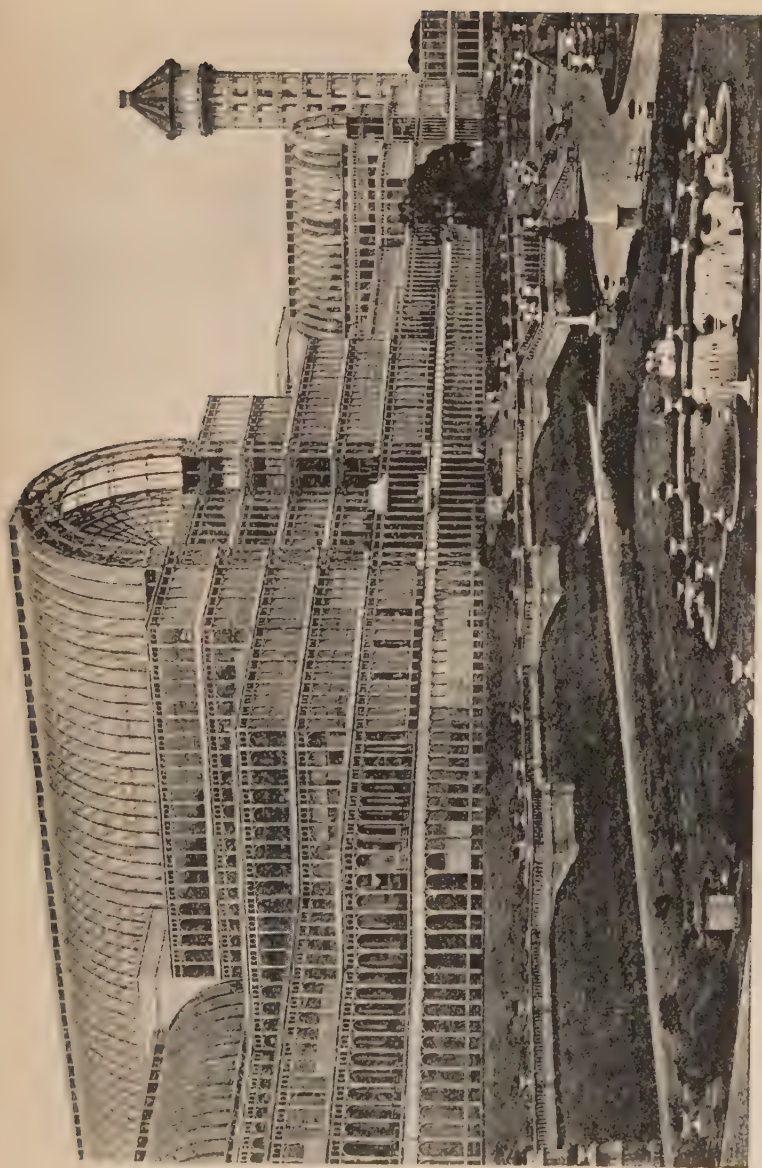
Palmerston remarked at the time that "the Emperor will long remember what has happened, and be ready to take any advantage to pay us off"; but as it turned out, only a few years passed by before the war that Russia had desired broke out. Our foreign minister, however, had won his victory for the time, and this amongst other things made him greatly liked in the country. A little later, when he made a famous speech about standing up for the rights of British subjects all over the world, he became more popular still. But even in this case, Palmerston was somewhat rash, for some of the British subjects he spoke of were not worth his championship. On the whole, the other ministers found him something of an anxiety, especially when new troubles arose in Europe. This, unfortunately, happened a few years after the middle of the century.

VI. THE CRIMEAN WAR

At the turn of the century, when its second half began, a good many people in England had, as it happened, formed the idea that a long period of peace was opening before us. The years of revolution in other countries had passed safely by, and the various disputes with foreign powers in which Lord Palmerston had eagerly engaged appeared to have been quietly settled. An event which encouraged this idea of general peace was the opening of "the Exhibition of all Nations," always remembered as the Great Exhibition, in London at the beginning of May, 1851. This was a scheme launched

by Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, and it turned out a brilliant success. Being the first exhibition of the kind with which we are now familiar, it was very popular indeed ; foreign goods poured in to be exhibited, and foreign visitors to look at the results ; Prince Louis Napoleon, then still French president, took the greatest interest in the whole affair. Everybody was much impressed by the Crystal Palace, which was built for the occasion ; the exhibition was held in Hyde Park, but the Palace was afterwards removed to Sydenham. Foreigners were also greatly struck by the cheerful and orderly appearance of the English crowds, and altogether Queen Victoria was only expressing what many people thought when she described the exhibition as "the greatest triumph of peace which the world has ever seen."

Unfortunately, however, the czar of Russia and his advisers had very different matters in their minds. It was not surprising that they should have, and when people in our islands talked about wars ceasing forever they were a little apt to forget the difficulties pressing upon some Continental nations. Turkey had been a source of trouble for very many years. In 1852 the power of the Turks still extended over a great part of the Balkan peninsula, and these countries were just as terribly ill-managed as Greece had been earlier in the century. Most statesmen of all nations were, in fact, agreed that it would be an excellent thing if the Turks could be driven out of Europe altogether, and sent back to Asia, whence they originally came. But the difficulty was to agree on any fair way of doing this. To every government except the Russian it seemed too strong a measure to attack Turkey unless she attacked some one



The Crystal Palace
(Designed by Joseph Paxton. First erected in Hyde Park for the Great Exhibition of 1851)

else. Moreover, the other European powers knew that Russia would get far the most out of any such attack, and they were afraid that she would grow too powerful for the comfort of the rest of the Continent.

The czar, whose name was Nicholas I., had his own plan quite ready, and for some time had been cautiously trying to find out what the ministers of other nations would think of it. At the beginning of 1853 he had a conversation with the British ambassador who attended his court, and said, "We have on our hands a sick man—a very sick man—and it will be a great misfortune if one of these days he should slip away from us, before the necessary arrangements have been made." By the "sick man" Nicholas meant Turkey, and it was a phrase which soon grew famous. He wanted to make sure beforehand that our government would agree to what he proposed, so that Russia might begin the business of getting rid of the Turks before, perhaps, some of their ill-treated subjects rose up and did it for themselves. His idea was that Serbia, Roumania and Bulgaria should come under Russian influence instead of being under Turkish rule, and that Great Britain should take over Egypt, with which up to that time we had not concerned ourselves as we did later.

Our ministers did not approve of these suggestions, but they would hardly have brought us to the point of war with Russia if another quarrel had not broken out between Nicholas I. and Louis Napoleon, now emperor of the French. Napoleon was anxious to make his subjects forget any discontent about the way he had turned the republic into an empire, and he thought he could do so most easily by being very masterful and warlike with the governments of other nations. He and

the czar fell into a dispute as to which of them ought to stand up against the Turks for the rights of the Christians living in Palestine. And though it seems curious that such a question as that should lead the French, the Turks, and ourselves as allies into a war against Russia, this was really, in the confusion of everybody's ideas and wishes, what took place. Lord Palmerston was very much against Russia, and so was the British minister living at the court of the sultan of Turkey. They encouraged the Turks to refuse all the demands of the czar about the protection of the Christians; and when Russian troops actually invaded Turkey to enforce these demands, all hopes of peace were gone. Great Britain was soon committed, together with France, to saving the Turks from the power of the czar.

The declaration of war in 1854 was very popular with most people in England, strange as this must seem to us now. It was probably not widely understood quite what a bad state of affairs we were fighting to keep up when we allied ourselves with the Turks; and there was a general idea that the czar Nicholas must be a very grasping and ambitious person, which, indeed, no doubt he was. Our soldiers were sent off with great enthusiasm to join the French and start for the east; crowds cheered Lord Raglan, the commander-in-chief, in the streets; warlike speeches were made at public dinners and in the House of Commons. A certain number of people, however, objected to the war, and in Parliament they were led by John Bright. He steadily declared that the quarrel was none of ours, that ministers had let the country be dragged into it by the selfishness of the Emperor Napoleon III., and that it was going to be a war of governments and not of peoples.

In any case, one thing was certain, that if we were going to send an army abroad, we ought to have been better prepared to manage the business than we actually were. Our troops were fine fighting men, but the regiments had been allowed to fall far below their full strength, perhaps because of the belief in a future of peace; and, moreover, they were quite unused to working together in large divisions, and had no really good generals. Even worse was the fact that nobody understood or troubled about a proper system of supplying soldiers with food, clothing and medicines, or of moving the sick and wounded back from the front. In our own day we have seen how immensely important all these things are, and what a help it is to the bravest and most enduring of armies to be well looked after in these respects. But by reason of ignorance and carelessness there was, in 1854, a terribly different state of affairs. The story of the Crimean war is one of wonderful courage on the part of our officers and men, and sad mismanagement by nearly everybody else.

As a first serious attack on Russia it was decided to try and take Sevastopol, a fortress in a strong position on the Black Sea. This place could be reached by ship, which was an advantage to us; and, moreover, one of the czar's fleets was known to be lying near the fortress for safety, and this the British and French hoped to destroy. The allied armies landed easily in the Crimea, but it was then found that nearly all the horses, mules and ponies which should have carried their baggage had, for some reason, been left behind. However, by hiring a few carts from the natives the troops managed to push on, and met the Russians for the first time near the river Alma. The enemy was in a very strong

position on high ground, but his defences and batteries were stormed by the British, whose deadly shooting drove the Russians back. The generals of all three nations were about equally incompetent at the battle of the Alma. The Russian ought to have been able to arrange his forces so as to hold the hills they were on, but did not; the French general lost great numbers of men in useless movements; and as for our own commander-in-chief, Lord Raglan, he got into the enemy's lines by accident, and could have been taken prisoner if the Russians had kept a better look-out. However, the battle of the Alma was a decided victory for the Allies, and Sevastopol might very likely have been taken at once if the generals had not preferred to settle down in front of it and prepare for a regular siege.

This was a very unfortunate decision, because, in the first place, winter was coming on, and the sufferings of the besieging armies were certain to be very great. Artillery had not made any very marked progress since the time of the Peninsular War, and there were no huge guns such as are now used to knock down fortifications, so it was very difficult to take a well-defended fortress. Moreover, the Russians were able before long to send reinforcements to try and relieve their army inside Sevastopol, which made our task more formidable than ever. In October a strong Russian force came down upon the port of Balaclava, which we were holding to land our supplies, but which was only defended by a small number of troops, chiefly cavalry. Against heavy odds the British managed to defend the port, although they could not drive the Russians very far back. The most successful work in this battle was done by Scarlett's brigade of heavy dragoons, whose charge stopped the

main advance of the enemy. But Balaclava will always be chiefly remembered for "the charge of the Light Brigade," which was ordered by mistake and should never have been done, but yet showed the heroic courage and determination of the men who carried it out. Lord Raglan's vague directions were misunderstood, and the Light Brigade of 670 cavalymen thought they were required to charge straight into the enemy's batteries. They did it, riding forward for a mile and a half under fire on three sides from the whole Russian army, captured the guns, and broke the enemy's line. But they were not supported, and had to fight their way back after terrible losses.

In the next battle it was the British infantry which had its turn. The Russians made another fierce attack on the besiegers on some high ground at a place called Inkerman; the fight was begun in a thick fog, early one November morning, and became a hand-to-hand struggle amongst hillsides and valleys, each regiment doing what it could. Perhaps, indeed, our men had all the better chance when their generals could not see what they were about, and interfere by giving them orders. At any rate, a force of 9000 British, helped at the end of the fight by 7000 French, succeeded in beating 40,000 Russians. Inkerman was called, from the strange conditions in which it was fought, "the soldiers' battle." It was the last they had a chance of fighting before the really severe winter weather began.

During the next few months, while snow lay thick on the ground and deep in the trenches, the hardships of the British army were terribly severe, and mismanagement made everything ten times worse. Supplies were brought to the coast, but there was no proper means of getting

them to the men on the heights near Sevastopol. Such horses and mules as had been brought out with the army soon died; the people at home forgot to send out the 2000 tons of hay which had been ordered to feed these animals, and the army authorities did not trouble to find any more. The soldiers themselves had to fetch what was absolutely necessary. "I have seen our men," wrote a Scottish colonel afterwards, "after having come back from the trenches, and having barely time to eat some biscuit and coffee, sent off to Balaclava to bring up rations, warm clothing, blankets, etc. They would return at night, after their fourteen-mile tramp through the mud, and throw themselves down on the floors of their tents as if they were dead, so exhausted that even if their dinners had been got ready for them, many of them could not have eaten a morsel. Next morning probably a third of them would be in hospital, and the remainder for the trenches the following evening." The food when the men got it was poor, the clothing was insufficient, their tents were not in the least suited to the weather. Great numbers of them fell ill, and when they did it was quite impossible to look after them properly. In what were called hospitals near Sevastopol the patients lay on the bare ground, and often had to be fed on salt beef and biscuit. Through all these hardships, however, the courage of the soldiers held firm. Lord Wolseley said afterwards that the private in the Crimea "fought like a hero, and suffered with the steadfastness of a martyr."

People at home, of course, went through most of the winter knowing nothing of all this. Then, partly through letters from officers, but chiefly by the descriptions of *The Times* correspondent, the nation came to understand

what the army was enduring. There was a great outburst of anger, and the Government was quickly forced into doing something to help. Liberal supplies were sent out, with navvies to build a railway for them to move about on; soon there was a proper system of transport, and the fresh troops that went out were at least fed and clothed.

But the greatest work of rescue for the soldiers in the Crimea was done mainly by one woman—Florence Nightingale. She had been interested from her girlhood in the work of nursing, and had studied it so thoroughly as to make herself really skilful both in treating patients and in the management of a hospital. When the first news of the state of things at the front reached England, Miss Nightingale wrote at once to the War Office offering to go out; and, as a matter of fact, her letter crossed with one from the Secretary of State asking her to undertake the work. She started at once for Constantinople with a number of other trained nurses to help, and a second party followed soon after.

What was called the best British hospital was at Scutari, but even here Florence Nightingale found every kind of ignorance, carelessness, and neglect. Bedding and clothing were dirty, the food was unsuitable, the patients were simply left to lie for hours in pain and discomfort. It did not take her very long to make a complete change. At first it was understood that her only duty was to report on the state of things to the authorities at home, but very soon the chief control passed into her hands. By the cleanliness alone which Florence Nightingale enforced she must have saved many hundreds of soldiers' lives. Then she was untiring in her demand for proper foods and medicines, until at last these were freely supplied.

The men themselves knew very well what they owed to her. Instead of their time in hospital being one long misery, it was peaceful or even happy ; and what they valued more than anything was the sympathy and watch-



Florence Nightingale

(From the new memorial in St Paul's Cathedral)

ful kindness of their new nurse. At night she used to walk through the wards to see whether anybody was restless or in pain ; it was this which won her the name, "The Lady with the Lamp." One sign of the soldiers' gratitude was that they all subscribed, putting pennies together,

for the making of a portrait-bust of Florence Nightingale ; but her place in their memory was probably what she cared for most.

At home it soon became known how much the whole nation owed to this able woman. Her name grew famous everywhere, and when at last she was about to leave Scutari, the Admiralty wished to send a battleship to bring her back in state. But she preferred to come quietly without anybody's notice. In later life Florence Nightingale did a very great deal of valuable work in improving the hospitals of England. The sick nurse of early Victorian times, as Dickens's novels will tell us, was a very different person from the trained nurse of to-day. She was usually ignorant, lazy, and careless, very often dirty and drunken as well. The change in this matter must have immensely lessened the sufferings of sick people, and it is a change due to Florence Nightingale more than to any other person.

The war in the Crimea dragged on all through the spring and summer of 1855. The allied armies began storming Sevastopol about midsummer, and in September the place fell. That success, however, was due much more to the French attack than to ours, for their force had been greatly strengthened and was now led by a much more skilful general. Partly for this reason, perhaps, the British commanders were very eager to bring out new troops and to go on with the war more vigorously than ever. Although Sevastopol had fallen the Russian armies were not really defeated, and to many Englishmen it seemed as if the real struggle was only just beginning. But the French emperor was quite determined to begin discussing terms of peace. He had got what he really wanted out of the war by turning the attention of his

subjects away from their home affairs, and he saw no use in wasting more money or more lives. The czar of Russia, on his side, was equally anxious to end the war. Nicholas I. had died suddenly, and his son saw that the Allies were too strong to allow him to do what he liked with Turkey. As these two rulers were now eager for peace, nobody else had much excuse for going on; and a treaty was made at Paris by which Russia agreed to give up a little bit of her dominions, and Turkey promised to rule her subjects better.

Some people had always found it rather difficult to know what we were fighting for in the Crimean war. We did, indeed, prevent the Turkish empire from being torn in pieces, but that was not a very great object in itself. It had been said that our friendship with the sultan would lead him to change his ways of government completely; as a matter of fact, however, he went on exactly as he had done before. There was always trouble about his Christian subjects, and in another twenty years war between Turkey and Russia broke out again. John Bright, as we have seen, was one of the men who maintained that we were shedding blood without sufficient cause; and during 1854 and 1855 he made several eloquent speeches in Parliament to urge this belief. Here is a famous passage from one of them, made a year before peace was declared.

“I cannot but notice, in speaking to gentlemen who sit on either side of this House, or in speaking to anyone I meet between this House and any of the localities we frequent when this House is up—I cannot, I say, but notice that an uneasy feeling exists as to the news which may arrive by the next mail from the East. I do not suppose that your troops are to be beaten in actual conflict with the foe, or that they will be driven into the

sea ; but I am certain that many homes in England in which there now exists a fond hope that the distant ones may return—many such homes may be rendered desolate when the next mail shall arrive. The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land ; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one, as when the first-born were slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two side-posts of our doors, that he may spare us and pass on ; he takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and the lowly, and it is on behalf of all these classes that I make this solemn appeal.

“I tell the noble Lord (Lord Palmerston), if he be ready honestly and frankly to endeavour . . . to put an end to this war, no word of mine, no vote of mine, will be given to shake his power for one single moment, or to change his position in this House. I am sure that the noble Lord is not inaccessible to appeals made to him from honest motives and with no unfriendly feeling. The noble Lord has been for more than forty years a member of this House. Before I was born, he sat upon the Treasury bench, and he has spent his life in the service of his country. He is no longer young, and his life has extended almost to the term allowed to man. I would ask, I would entreat the noble Lord to take a course which, when he looks back upon his whole political career—whatever he may therein find to be pleased with, whatever to regret—cannot but be a source of gratification to him. By adopting that course he would have the satisfaction of reflecting that, having obtained the object of his laudable ambition—having become the foremost subject of the Crown, the director of the destinies of his country, and the presiding genius of her councils—he had achieved

a still higher and nobler ambition : that he had returned the sword to the scabbard, that at his word torrents of blood had ceased to flow, that he had restored tranquillity to Europe, and saved this country from the indescribable calamities of war."

But in spite of all the misery it brought about, the Crimean war is now chiefly remembered for the gallant actions of those who took part in it. Tennyson's well-known poem will always remind us of the brave cavalry at Balaclava :—

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
"Forward, the Light Brigade !
Charge for the guns !" he said :
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade !"
Was there a man dismay'd ?
Not though the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd :
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die :
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;

Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turned in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd :
Plung'd in the battery-smoke
Right through the line they broke ;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd ;
Then they rode back—but not,
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade ?
O the wild charge they made !
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made !
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred !

VII. THE INDIAN MUTINY

THE Crimean war was only just at an end when our country had to face another and even more serious trouble, this time still further East. In 1857 there broke out a great Mutiny amongst the native troops of our army in India.

Although nothing so dreadful was expected as did actually take place, men who understood the state of things in India were not surprised that there should be trouble of some kind. The Sepoys, as the native soldiers were called, did not at that time feel anything like the same attachment to the British government that their descendants feel to-day. It would have been hardly possible to imagine them eagerly offering to come to Europe and fight for Great Britain, as the Indians did in 1914, so soon as they knew that we were at war with Germany. During the earlier part of the nineteenth century the Sepoys had served in our army partly for the sake of the British officers who led them, partly for the good pay, partly because our many victories over independent native states had made them think we could never be beaten.

But it so happened in 1857 that all these motives for loyalty had one by one been somewhat weakened. Some years before we had had the worst of a war with the Afghans, and had only just succeeded, with a good deal of difficulty, in beating the Sikhs. The Sepoys who knew of this began to say to themselves that, after all, the

British were not invincible. Then, again, the government had made some changes in their pay and terms of service which did not please them. And what probably had more effect still was that the tie between the British officers and the native troops was not so close as it used to be. Steamships had made it much easier to get home, and officers naturally used their leave in that way instead of staying in India. Even when they were in the country they were often moved about for some reason from regiment to regiment. Finally, there happened to be in 1857 far fewer British troops than usual in India, owing to the number which had never been sent back after the Crimean war.

Besides all this there were other probable causes of trouble in India. We must always remember that our empire there has grown bit by bit. Even now we do not govern by any means the whole peninsula; there are many native states, as they are called, which are ruled by their own princes. But in the early nineteenth century British India was much smaller than it is now, and a great deal was added to it in the years just before the Mutiny. Sometimes a province which came under British rule settled down contentedly at once, but in other cases there was a good deal of ill-feeling at first, even when our chief reason for interfering had been the sufferings of the natives under a bad prince.

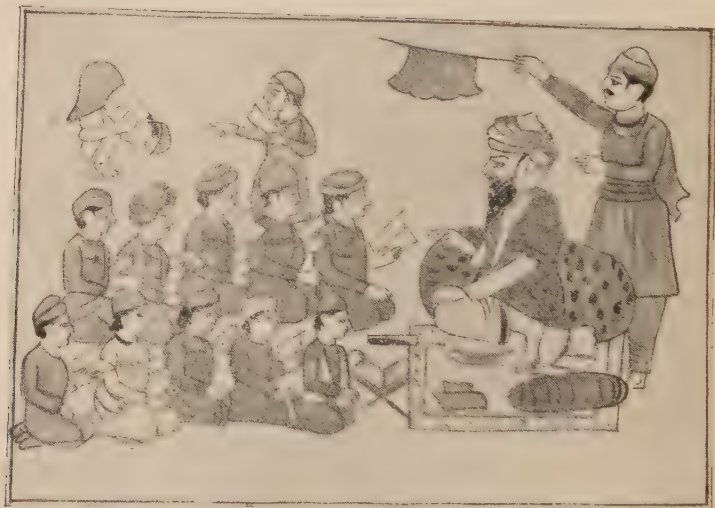
The governor-general who did much to extend our power about the middle of the century was Lord Dalhousie, a man who took a very great interest in India. He did other good work of different kinds, such as getting railways built, setting up schools for the natives and giving the more educated ones employment under the government. And some of the provinces which he took



A group of Sepoys

(The three officers to the right in the bottom row are a Sikh, a Dogra, and a Pathan. Most of the men are Pathans (Mohammedans); the three with Chinese features are Ghosorias (Hindus by religion); the three with square beards brushed upwards are Sikhs.)

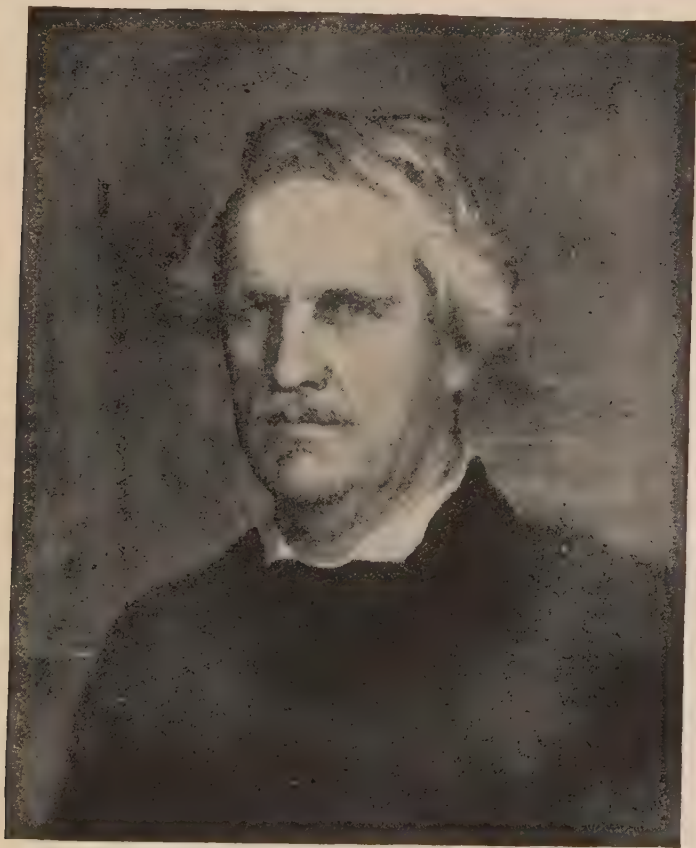
over became loyal to British rule almost at once. This was specially true of the Panjáb, inhabited by those Sikhs with whom our soldiers had fought hard. Its settlement after the war was entrusted to an able man named Sir John Lawrence, and so well managed that the people soon became contented British subjects. But there were other provinces in which Lord Dalhousie did not succeed so



A native picture of a school in the Panjáb, India

quickly in making the government popular. One of these was Oude, which, as it happened, had been abominably ruled by its native prince, and was taken over by the British mainly for that reason. This prince wasted all his people's money and was no use to anybody, but even the people he robbed thought he had a right to his throne. So there was a good deal of discontent amongst those who had been his subjects, and these included many Sepoys.

When Lord Canning, who succeeded Dalhousie as governor-general, was on the point of going out, he said in a speech at a banquet of the East India Company:



Sir John Lawrence
(1811-1879)

“ We must not forget that in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, at first no bigger than a man’s hand, but which, growing larger and larger, may

at last threaten to burst and overwhelm us with ruin." This was proved true before he had been a year at his new post.

The first serious outbreak took place early in May 1857. It is always said that the serving out of a new kind of cartridge to the native troops began the Mutiny, and in a sense this is quite true. The discontented Sepoys were



The Kashmir Gate, Delhi

told that the British government meant to interfere with their religion, and that the new cartridges formed part of the plan, since they were made with something which the rules of this religion forbade people to touch. This idea set all the smouldering ill-feeling in a blaze. A native brigade near Delhi rose against its officers, killed many of them, and marched into the city. There other Sepoys joined the mutineers, and a large number of white people

were murdered ; then an old native prince who was living quietly there was brought out and declared emperor of India. The knowledge of this rising flew all over northern India. It is always said by those who live in the East that news travels there with mysterious speed, carried somehow by whispers amongst the people as fast as if it were sent over telegraph wires. At every place where there were native troops in the province of Oude and round about it, mutiny suddenly broke out, and in most cases the British officers were betrayed and murdered.

It is interesting and rather pathetic to know how many of these officers there were who could not believe that their own regiments would rise against them, whatever the rest might do. This shows partly perhaps that they were too trustful, but partly also that the outbreak of the Mutiny was as much like a sudden madness as anything else. The Sepoys, indeed, were for the time no better than savages, murdering women as readily as men. At some places there were tragic results from this reluctance of the British officers to believe in native enmity. At Cawnpore there was an old general, Sir Hugh Wheeler, who trusted both the Sepoys and a native prince named Nana Sahib too long for safety. Instead of seizing at once the best-fortified place in the town, Wheeler did nothing for some time ; and then he placed his troops and all the British then living in Cawnpore in a flat open field defended only by a mud wall. In this field, with nothing more than a few bungalows for shelter, nine hundred English people, including four hundred women and children, were besieged by thousands of mutineers and other armed natives. Nana Sahib, who had always pretended to be quite satisfied with his position under the British government, was directing the attack.

By this time it was mid-summer, and intensely hot. English people in India nearly always suffer if they expose themselves too much to the sun, and do not take precautions against it ; so the heat alone of the flat enclosure where the British were confined would have made the defence of Cawnpore a terrible experience. Besides that there was thirst, for they were poorly supplied with water ; and worst of all was the hourly danger of a cruel death. But yet this brave garrison held out for three weeks, beating back every sudden assault of the enemy, tending their wounded, willingly living on as little food and water as would serve to keep them alive. They were busy day and night with watching and defence ; the women in their part of the work were as heroic as the men. In spite of many deaths from wounds and exhaustion, the defence would not have been given up if Nana Sahib had not solemnly promised to send everybody safely away down the river. Upon this undertaking the whole garrison came out ; but Nana Sahib treacherously broke his word, ordering his troops to fire upon the British as they were getting into the boats. Almost every man was killed, while the women and children were taken away, to be thrust into a small and stifling prison. Here they suffered for eighteen days, until Nana Sahib, hearing that British troops were drawing near to rescue these prisoners, ordered that they should be murdered too. It is to the credit of the mutinous Sepoys that they refused to do this wicked piece of work, and Nana Sahib was obliged to send armed ruffians from his court.

It was the news of this treachery at Cawnpore which, more than anything else, roused the fury of the British at home, and made them stern in punishing the chief mutineers when the time came. But our troops were not

allowed to take such revenge as they might have longed for when they saw how their countrymen had suffered. Canning, the governor-general, was anxious to prevent anything like hasty reprisals. "I will not govern in anger," he said, and issued orders to prevent Sepoys from being executed on suspicion or before their guilt was fully proved. Some people even thought that he went too far in the direction of mercy to the mutineers ; but the name given to him in consequence, "Clemency Canning," was certainly an honourable one. Even the British force which arrived at Cawnpore too late was kept firmly in hand by its commander. These soldiers burned with rage at the signs of that cruel massacre, and they had good reason ; but their leader refused to allow either violence or robbery amongst the mass of the natives, and was strong enough to make himself obeyed.

This man, General Havelock, was one of the heroes of the Mutiny. He was a north-country man, full of determination and perseverance, but although he had served in the army since 1815, his chance to do any special service or to win distinction had never come till now. He was a man of strong religious feeling, and from the beginning had greatly influenced the soldiers under him. It is said that on one occasion in earlier Indian warfare when an attack was to be made on an outpost, the commanding officer sent specially for the men known to be attached to Havelock ; some of the others were sure to be the worse for drink, but "Havelock's Saints," as they were called, could always be depended upon to be sober and fit for duty. This power over men was of the greatest value to Havelock in the difficult days of the Mutiny.

The march which brought him to Cawnpore was in itself a wonderful feat. His force covered 126 miles,

under the great heat of the Indian July sun, in nine days, and fought four successful actions on the way. The



Gen. Sir Henry Havelock
(1795-1857)

mutineers and Nana Sahib's men were in great force against him, and they had the advantage of knowing the country very well. But the British soldiers, by their

coolness and steadiness in charging straight up to the enemy's batteries, gained the victory each time, and fought their way steadily through. That they reached Cawnpore too late must have been a bitter disappointment, but every man must have known that no effort had been spared to save the unfortunate garrison. Havelock's next great struggle, for the relief of Lucknow, was rewarded with better success.

This city was the old capital of Oude, and, therefore, was quite certain from the beginning to be a centre of rebellion. But the officer in command of the British troops there, Sir Henry Lawrence, was a wise man and a fine leader. He saw in the early days what was coming, and prepared for it. The British Residency, a substantial group of buildings, was fortified, and trenches were dug round it. Then it was made quite certain which of the native soldiers would be faithful; and at the end of June about a thousand British troops and other people, with a few hundred sepoys, took up their quarters in the Residency, and got ready for a siege. During the anxious two months before this was done, Henry Lawrence had been the life and soul of the place. He was a man of fine and unselfish character, and those under his command would have sacrificed anything for his sake. But he gave up his own life by exposing himself too recklessly, and was killed by a shell two days after the siege had begun.

The officer who then took command determined to carry on the duty as Lawrence would have done. The defenders of Lucknow were better placed than the ill-fated garrison of Cawnpore had been; but they were besieged by great numbers of mutineers and other native enemies. As many as sixty thousand of these at one time are said to have surrounded the buildings and courtyards held by the

English. The natives had good artillery and rifles, and their engineers were skilful at driving covered ways up to the walls, and tunnels beneath them. Furthermore, at certain points the high houses of the native quarter of the town came very near the Residency, so the besiegers were able to fire down from windows and house-tops on the British inside. Nevertheless, Lucknow held out for nearly three months, men and women alike facing every hardship and misery rather than give way. Perhaps amongst the worst of their sufferings was the uncertainty and deferred hope of help coming to them. Before Lawrence died he had calculated that the place could be defended for a fortnight at most. But that time passed by and many weeks more, and still the relieving force did not come. News reached Lucknow from friendly natives who slipped out and returned, so the English knew that Havelock was trying to reach them ; sometimes they heard that he was coming quickly, and then again that new difficulties had blocked his way.

Havelock's task was a very hard one. His troops had been few enough when he first got to Cawnpore, but as he pushed eastwards from there towards Lucknow, fighting as he went, disease, exhaustion and wounds had robbed him of many of those he started with. Twice he was obliged to fall back on Cawnpore and wait for reinforcements, which, when they came, were very small. Havelock afterwards described his decision to do this a second time as the most painful of his whole life. The soldiers did not understand why they need retreat from an enemy they always defeated in battle, and many officers also believed that by pushing rapidly on they could succeed in what everybody longed to do. Nevertheless it is certain that Havelock was right, and the fact that he was almost

alone in thinking so, must make us admire him all the more for being firm in his resolution. He knew that even if his little force could reach Lucknow as it was, the enemy there would be too strong, and our men's lives would be sacrificed to no purpose. Having made up his mind, Havelock would allow no one to dispute with him, and to an officer left at Cawnpore who tried to do so he wrote very sternly indeed.

At last, however, the moment came for a new advance, for fresh troops, commanded by General Outram, joined Havelock's men at the place where they were waiting impatiently. Outram is remembered as one of the most chivalrous gentlemen who ever served in the British Army, and on the day when he joined Havelock he showed extraordinary unselfishness. The government had intended him to take over the command and lead the march to Lucknow ; but knowing how bitter a disappointment this would be to Havelock, he refused to take his place, and offered to go with him simply as an adviser and friend. There were now more than three thousand British, and without a day's delay they pressed on towards Lucknow, fighting the enemy wherever they met him, and always with the same determined boldness.

It was on September 25th, after a fierce struggle to break through the last line of mutineers, that Havelock's Highland regiments came at last in sight of the Residency and saw the tattered flag of our country still waving proudly from the roof. Its brave defenders were torn that day between hope and fear. They had heard that their countrymen were near, and again that they were driven back ; but at last the sound of the bagpipes, faint at first but growing steadily louder, told them that help was at hand and they were not to die. Under a rain of

bullets the British soldiers came on, led by Outram and



Delhi Mutiny Monument

("In memory of the officers and soldiers, British and native, of the Delhi Field Force who were killed in action or died of wounds or disease between the 30th May and 20th September 1857.

"This monument has been erected by the comrades who lament their loss and by the Govt. they served so well.")

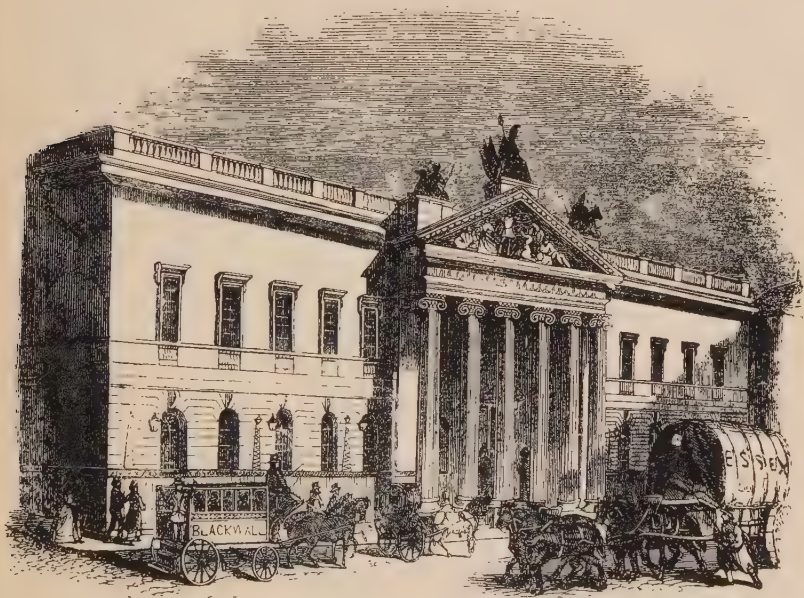
Havelock, and as they passed the gate they broke into a triumphant cheer. It was caught up inside the wall; from every trench and battery and ruined house the defenders of Lucknow shouted their welcome. Women crowded round to grasp the hands of the Highlanders; children were lifted up to kiss them, and even the soldiers themselves could not help weeping for pity and joy.

Within two months more the rebel forces were finally driven away from the district round Lucknow, and by that time the important town of Delhi had fallen to the British attack, and tens of thousands of our troops

were being poured into Calcutta and Bombay. The rest of the fighting consisted in the steady pursuit of different forces of the enemy, and in the taking of his strongholds one by one. The treacherous Nana Sahib escaped from our troops, to everybody's regret; but he disappeared into the jungle and was never heard of again. In one of the latest battles of the war an Indian princess, who had cruelly massacred a number of English prisoners, died bravely fighting like a man at the head of her troops. This was in June 1858, and by then the Mutiny was practically at an end.

After the Mutiny the old East India Company, which

had had such a wonderful history, was finally broken up. In early days it had kept the whole Indian trade in its hands, and had governed the country as well. But for a long time before 1857 the Company had been largely controlled by the government, and there was no reason why India should not be ruled directly by ministers



East India House

(About 1840)

chosen for that purpose. This change now took place. Queen Victoria was declared sovereign of India, to be represented in the country itself by a viceroy, who replaced the older governor-general. At home there was to be a secretary of state, or minister, who would carry out the wishes of Parliament as to our government in the East ;

he is the head of what we call the India office. To serve under the viceroy there is a fine body of men called the Indian civilians, who work actually among the people, keeping order and doing justice so far as they can.

In the royal proclamation issued by Queen Victoria when the transfer took place, it was declared that "the rights, dignity and honour" of the native princes would be respected, that nobody's religion would be interfered with, and that there would be no difference of treatment for any of the Queen's subjects on account of race or colour. These promises have been well kept. British rule in India is admitted to be fair and carried on for the people's benefit. Our army there, British and Indian, keeps the peace, and prevents not only an attack by any European nation, but also wars between the different peoples of the peninsula. Some amongst them are much less civilised than others, and it is not likely that at present they would get on very well together without some authority to control them all. Moreover, the British government has done a great deal of good by building railways, and engineering works for carrying water where it is needed. Famine is much less frequent in India than it used to be; for the peasant-farmers are not so dependent on the regular rains, and when there is scarcity in one district food can easily reach it from another. Then the dreadful diseases of the East, plague and cholera, are fought by British doctors with greater knowledge and skill than any but a few natives can have as yet. Schools and colleges have been set up in steadily increasing numbers; and we have every reason to be proud of the history of British rule in India.

VIII. THE GROWTH OF THE OVERSEAS EMPIRE

BETWEEN the latter years of the eighteenth century and the end of the nineteenth there grew up what has sometimes been called the Colonial Empire of Great Britain, or, more properly, the British Dominions over the seas.

The three most important of these are Canada, Australia and South Africa. In all of them the climate is healthy for white people, so British people can settle for life and bring up children there. There are other smaller colonies besides in which this is the case, and others where it is not so, but in the hot and unhealthy places where Englishmen can live only for a time, the government is usually of a different kind, being partly controlled by ours at home.

India is, of course, an entirely different kind of country from Canada or Australia ; for while in them the coloured natives are few in number and will probably become fewer, in India the British who go out to govern or to trade are a mere handful compared with the natives.

Canada

As we know already, it was the Seven Years' war, with Wolfe's victory at Quebec, which decided that the British and not the French should add Canada to their dominions. But this did not mean that the French colonists already there were driven out. On the contrary, they stayed and increased in numbers very fast ; and it is one of the

interesting things about Canada that people from two nations have lived there from the beginning side by side. The French settlers are very well contented nowadays with their position in the empire, although they have always kept up their own language and customs. An observer who travelled there in 1866 remarked how easy it would have been amongst the French Canadians to imagine yourself living in a country town of old France. "In such a scene," he added, "it is impossible to forget that British troops are here employed as guardians of the only true French colony in the world." No doubt it was just because the government made no attempt to interfere with their way of living that these people, many of whom could not speak a word of English, were content to be fellow-subjects of our empire.

But the French Canadians had not always been so contented as they were in 1867. Thirty years earlier, just about the time of Queen Victoria's coming to the throne, trouble arose in their province, which was known as Lower Canada, and a list of ninety-four complaints was forwarded to Great Britain, with threats of rebellion unless something could be done. The cause of the discontent was that the people felt they ought to have more complete control over their affairs than had at that time been given them. They had an Assembly, elected very much as our Parliament is. But the government was carried on independently, so, though the Assembly might approve or disapprove, it could not alter what was done. The rebellion did break out; it was soon put down, but afterwards the ministers at home decided that something ought to be done to satisfy the inhabitants. Those of English descent had been restless too, although not enough to make them rise against the government, and it seemed

certain that some change would have to be made. A very able man, Lord Durham, was sent out to report upon the state of Canada. He suggested first that the province of French Canada, or Quebec should be joined with the English province of Ontario; and in the second place that there should be colonial ministers controlled by the Assembly as British ministers are by Parliament.

The first of these changes was not a great success, but the second answered so well that, later, the people were able, without quarrelling, to find another arrangement for themselves which suited them better. In 1867, they formed themselves into the "Dominion" of Canada, each province looking after its own separate affairs, but joining together with the other provinces for other purposes in a kind of big Parliament to represent them all. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia joined Ontario and Quebec in making up this Dominion to begin with, while the North-West territory and British Columbia, which were newer settlements, came in some years later. Since this was done there has been no discontent about methods of government in Canada.

One event which led the Canadians to join together in the Dominion was the outbreak of a great civil war between the Northern and Southern states of the American union. This war arose in the first place out of the question of having negro slaves. In the southern part of the country, in states such as Kentucky and Maryland, the owners of cotton plantations were used to slave labour and declared that they could not do without it. In the Northern states, people had begun by about 1865 to feel that the system could not possibly go on any longer. Then the South wanted to withdraw from the United States and do as it chose, but the government declared



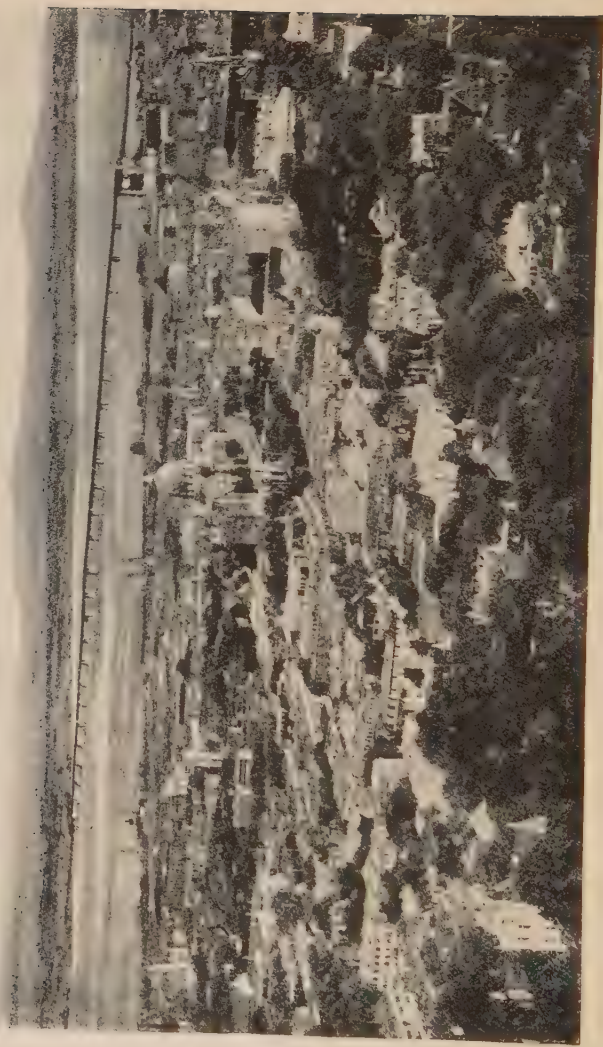
Quebec

(A view of part of the modern city)

that it had no right to do that. The war was a terrible one ; it ended with the victory of the North, which was both stronger and wealthier. Canada had felt a good deal of sympathy with the South ; so at the end of the war the Canadians felt that the victors were not likely to be very friendly to them, and that it would be as well for them, if possible, to strengthen themselves by union.

The chief question as to which Canadians afterwards disputed was of a very different kind. It was whether they should or should not build as quickly as possible a great railway right across Canada, joining the Atlantic ocean to the Pacific. Many people in the older provinces of Ontario and Quebec, which lie on the Atlantic coast, did not think it worth while to go to the enormous expense of making this line ; especially as an older one called the Grand Trunk, which ran through the richer part of the country only, had so far been working at a loss. The new railway would have to be made across two thousand miles of land which as yet was producing almost nothing. Indeed, when we look at a map and see how immense a country Canada is, and how small a part of it is occupied by the first settlements near Montreal and Quebec, we cannot wonder that it seemed a rash undertaking to build a railway line through all those miles of prairie and wilderness to reach the new provinces on the other side. Until about the year 1870 all the great region of the North-West had been regarded as a mysterious and almost savage land, where fur traders were the only men likely to find a living ; and it took some years for this idea to change.

But British Columbia, far away on the Pacific coast, had joined the Dominion only on the understanding that the railroad was to be built, and she joined with the more enterprising party in old Canada to press for this being



Montreal and River St Lawrence

done. The final decision was brought about by three Scotsmen, who were the life and soul of the whole project. They were absolutely certain that the line would succeed, and after years of hard work they proved themselves right. The Canadian Pacific Railway was begun in 1880 and finished in 1886, after wonderful feats of engineering had been performed in taking it over the Rocky Mountains. Long before the last sections of it were laid people began to hope much from the opening up of the North-West. Instead of struggling in the "backwoods" of older Canada, trying to clear poor land which nobody else wanted, emigrants would now find themselves able to settle on the rich new land of the prairie, the best of which was capable of growing grain for many years in succession without a change. The two new provinces of Manitoba and Winnipeg seemed to promise great things to the colonists who hurried there both from Great Britain and from the older parts of Canada itself.

All these hopes were not fully realised at first, and it is only within the present century that the youngest Canadian states have begun to fulfil all the expectations formed about them. The Canadian Pacific railway, indeed, was profitable almost from the first, and gave promise of a future time when it would be a source of immense wealth. But it made its profits by charging high freights on the grain brought from the prairie, so the farmers who grew it were unable to make money so fast as they had hoped. It happened that in the United States also new corn-growing land was being opened up just about the same time. This great increase in the supply of grain made the price low; and when supplies from Manitoba or Winnipeg reached their market in Old Canada or in Europe, they often fetched no more than would

provide a decent living for the Canadians. The work, too, was very hard. Nothing was ready to the emigrant's hand. He had his house to build, his roads to make, his horses and cattle to shelter. The cold in winter is intense, and the ground is often frozen for months together; wheat has to be sown late and harvested in September, when there is danger of night frosts to ruin it. Then the loneliness of the prairie in those early days was, at times, a terrible experience. Empty land stretched for many miles all round each lonely homestead, and often a man would have to leave his wife and children for days together while he made a long and dangerous journey to fetch some necessity for the house or farm.

Not all of Canada, however, is prairie, or farm land. Forests have been a valuable part of the country from the beginning, and the "lumber" or timber trade a very important one. This has always been carried on chiefly in the eastern provinces of the Dominion, the woodcutters going together in parties of perhaps twenty, and living in camps hidden away in the heart of the forest country. We can imagine theirs as a wild, hard life, felling the great trees all day, eating and sleeping in a tiny hut, seeing no one outside the camp for many months together. Great strength as well as skill is needed to make a good lumberer, and to the end of the nineteenth century, at any rate, machinery was of little use in the forest. The lumberer's axe felled the tree better than anything else; and when rivers thawed in the spring, great masses of timber were sent floating rapidly down to towns near the sea-coast.

These towns, in the second half of the century, grew steadily larger and more prosperous; there were handsome public buildings, fine houses, shops and schools. In the



A Canadian lumber raft

(Note the lumbermen on the logs, and the huts built on the raft to shelter the men during the voyage down the river)

streets of Quebec or Montreal the prairie and the lumber-camp must have seemed almost as remote as they did in London. But still Canada was a country mainly of open air life, and was likely to remain so for a very long time.

Australia and New Zealand

Australia is the only one of our colonies which has a whole continent to itself. Its name means that it is the most southern country in the world, and for some time before any settlements were made there, people had known that there must be land of some sort in those parts. But all ideas about it were vague until Captain Cook, a naval officer, made his famous voyages during the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Cook was the son of a farm labourer in Yorkshire; he had always had a strong taste for stories of adventure picked up from sailors, and at last decided to leave the shop where he worked and go to sea in a Whitby collier. Finding that a sailor's life suited him he joined the navy, and did so well during the Seven Years' war that before the end of it he had been made a lieutenant. One matter in which Cook specially distinguished himself was in making good charts of the ocean, and it was perhaps partly for this reason that he was chosen by the government to go out to the south Pacific and see what he could find. This was only nine years after the peace which gave us Canada, and British ministers, no doubt, were still feeling very confident and enterprising about founding colonies. Cook made three voyages altogether, which covered a period of several years. His accounts of the country were favourable on the whole, but they showed that some difficulties would have to be overcome by emi-

grants to Australia, and that gold and other precious things were not lying around there waiting to be picked



Captain Cook
(1728-1779)

up, as some people had imagined. The enmity of the natives was one thing that had to be considered, and Captain Cook himself unfortunately fell a victim to it,

being killed by savages in the Sandwich islands. He was a very great seaman and explorer, careless of danger to himself, but thoughtful for the men under his command. His early death was a great loss to the navy and the country.

On his first voyage, however, Cook had taken possession of Australia in the name of King George, and a few years afterwards the loss of the American colonies made thoughtful people in England eager to open up the new part of the world to take their place. The authorities had one idea about the uses of a colony which to us seems strange. They thought it a good plan to get rid of troublesome people by sending them to the other side of the world. Some were men who had broken the law, though their offences were often such as would be treated very lightly in our own day ; some may have been guilty of nothing worse than holding what were called dangerous opinions. At any rate they all helped to found the fine and high-spirited Australian nation we now see.

As time went by the possibilities of the new country became better known ; willing as well as unwilling colonists found their way to it, and the first governor of New South Wales did the very best he could for the place. It was found that the immense grassy uplands of Eastern Australia were amongst the best pastures in the world. Settlers possessing some little money began to drift in and set up their "stations," as the sheep and cattle farms were called, here and there on the great expanse. "Squatters" was the name given to these people, because they simply established themselves on unoccupied land without paying anything for it. As always in new countries, life at these stations must have been very lonely and monotonous. The flat grassy country stretched unbroken for great distances on every side, and the nearest neighbour was

probably very many miles away. The work itself was less varied than in corn-growing countries, where different kinds of farming can be carried on at once. On a sheep-run, even when there were many thousands of sheep, comparatively little labour was needed, except, indeed, in the case of disease or of one of the terrible Australian droughts, and then the work was very hard and the anxiety very



A sheep farm, New South Wales

great. But in spite of some misfortunes, the squatters of New South Wales soon began to grow rich, for their sheep flourished and multiplied amazingly. Wool, tallow and hides were sent home for sale in Europe; the mutton had to be disposed of in less distant markets, since no way had then been found of preserving meat during a long voyage.

In the meantime, further settlements had been made

in different parts of Australia. These were Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia, Southern Australia and Queensland. All had somewhat similar histories to that of New South Wales, and people expected them to develop in much the same way, except, indeed, that the conditions in Queensland were rather different from what they were everywhere else. This colony lies in the north



Gathering grapes on a New Zealand fruit farm

of Australia, which in that continent is the hot region, being nearest to the equator ; so, instead of having good pasture for sheep, Queensland produces sugar, wine, tobacco and cotton. The other states, as well as New South Wales, were expected by everybody to go on very much as they were, always thinly peopled, because pastoral countries never support a great number of men and women.

But just about the middle of the century something happened which made a startling change in Australian life. This was the discovery of gold in the soil of New South Wales. For some years there had been rumours that it was to be found there, and shepherds had at times brought in lumps of quartz which they believed to contain the metal. But nobody had paid much attention to these stories, and the government had discouraged the spread of them because they thought people were better employed in ordinary work than in digging for possible treasures. It was as a result of gold being found in California a year or two earlier that the final discovery was made in Australia. A New South Wales settler named Hargraves had spent eighteen months in California looking for gold, and though he made nothing out of his search, he gained much knowledge concerning land where gold was likely to be found. The more he studied the rocks and soil of California, the more he became convinced that in his own country he knew a place as promising as any. He returned to Sydney, and from there, as he related afterwards, went straight to a certain spot on the bank of a little stream known as Lewes Pard Creek. He felt absolutely sure that gold would be found there, and he proved to be right. Digging began, the gold-dust was discovered in the soil, and was washed and sifted out of it according to Hargraves's own directions.

When the matter was quite certain the government became most encouraging, and gave Hargraves a reward of £10,000. There soon followed what is known as "the gold rush" to Australia, when crowded steamers from every part of the world brought masses of men eager to pick up a fortune out of the ground. To go off to the diggings was the dream of every adventurous young man

who wanted to make money quickly, and of a great many, unfortunately, who had failed to make it in any other way. Each digger would "stake out a claim" for himself, which meant occupying a piece of ground along the creek or river bank, and paying for a government licence to work there. Much, of course, depended upon good luck in the first choice, and a man might easily toil for months, getting little return, while he saw his neighbour come upon a rich streak of soil in his first week's digging. It was a wild life on the Australian gold-fields, and many stories have been told of adventures there, of disappointments and sudden turns of good fortune, of narrow escapes from robbery when the digger was on the point of starting for home with his gold.

The rush of people into the colony, of course, made a great difference to the conditions of life there. The diggers had to be fed and clothed, and provided with anything else that they might want. Many men who went out to look for gold gave up the idea and started a factory or a shop instead, often making more money in that way than they would have done at the diggings. The real beginning of town life in Australia dates from this time; and Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane in particular, made rapid progress. For it was not in Lewes Pard Creek alone that gold was found. A squatter living not far from Bathurst made a great sensation by finding a huge lump of gold weighing more than 100 lb. and worth about £4000. Rich fields were found in Victoria, and within two years the number of people living upon them was equal to what the whole population of the colony had been before the discovery. Other diggings were opened up in Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania, and everywhere the same result followed in the growth



Sydney Harbour

of a large new class of people quite different from the early settlers in any of these colonies. Many of them were town-dwellers, but some, also, small farmers who grew crops instead of keeping enormous numbers of sheep. Just about the same time that all this took place, the Australian colonies became self-governing, with parliaments and ministers of their own.

Adventures on the gold-fields were not by any means



Adelaide, the capital of South Australia

(From a sketch made in November 1849. The first settlement here was in 1836)

the only stirring events in Australian life. As all settlements had been made round the coast, the whole huge interior of the continent was for a long time an unknown land; and the aim of explorers for many years was to push inland further and further up the rivers, or, better still, to cross the continent from south to north or from east to west. One of the most successful of the early explorers was Allan Cunningham, who about the year 1827 went northward along the coast of New South Wales and then turned inland; he found some of the best pasture-

land in the whole of Australia, and also showed the best way of advancing westward into the interior. But the difficulties were greater for the later explorers, who aimed at getting further away from the inhabited country. The chief danger of Australian travel lay rather in the distances to be covered than in anything else. There are no impassable mountain ranges in the whole continent, and no big rivers; the natives, as a rule, were not unfriendly, even at their first sight of a white man, and there were no savage beasts for travellers to fear. But the huge stretches of barren country, where neither food nor water could be found, made it necessary to reckon the time and prepare the supplies very carefully. A few days' delay might mean starvation; or still worse, if an unusually dry season had made the few streams disappear, there was the risk of dying by thirst.

Many men braved these dangers in their determination to know, if they could, what the whole of this new continent was like. One of them, Edward Eyre, began in 1838 by undertaking to drive 300 cattle across from Sydney to Adelaide, a journey which took him eight months. Afterwards he went with a flock of sheep from Adelaide to Perth, covering three hundred miles of quite unknown country in the course of the expedition, and showing, as he had done before, a route by which goods could be sent about from one place to another. Later still, he explored far into the interior, where he had often to march for five or six days without a drop of water. Still longer expeditions were undertaken by others after him; until, by the year 1860, when two explorers lost their lives through missing a companion who had waited four months with supplies for them, the general lie of the country was fairly well understood.

Since the Australians became self-governing they have, of course, had questions and disputes of their own to face and settle. One difficulty was between the rich "squatters" who had gone out first, or whose fathers had, and the poor people who wanted small farms to grow



Maori village, Ohinemutu, New Zealand

crops. The squatters, who had come to regard themselves as a sort of land-owning aristocracy, would have much preferred to keep practically the whole country as immense sheep-farms, and this disagreement lasted a good many years. The idea that the Australian colonies should unite together as the Canadian ones had done came up in some people's minds at an early period, but nothing was actually done until the end of the century.



Wellington, New Zealand

New Zealand, although it was colonised about the same time as Australia, has always felt itself to be independent, partly, no doubt, because it is a separate island. The settlers, also, had different experiences in some ways. There was, for instance, a strong and intelligent native race, called the Maoris, to deal with in New Zealand, instead of the feeble savages of Australia. Wars with these people, who naturally objected to having any of their land taken away from them, formed one of the great difficulties of the earlier periods, although, in later years, the two races settled down together very well. The trouble between squatters and small farmers did not exist in New Zealand, which is a more varied country than Australia and better watered, so that nobody ever thought it suited only to sheep. The colonists, who were chiefly Scots, preferred for many years to be divided amongst themselves into six little states, and did not decide to join together until 1875. Since then, however, they have, in a sense, been more closely bound together than most nations, for many things are done there by the government which in England in normal times have been left to private people. Such matters as life insurance, for example, are taken in hand by the state, which, also, owns the railways, and has a good deal to do with fixing rates of wages.

South Africa

The British colonies in South Africa have had a more troubled history than those either in Canada or in Australia, and it is all the greater satisfaction to know that under the Union government which it has now, the country is both glad and proud to be a part of the empire.

The main difficulty of past times came from the fact that British colonists were not the first to settle in South Africa. The Dutch, or Boers, as they were called, were established round about Cape Town when, after the year 1815, Englishmen and Scotsmen began to pour into the country. The soil of South Africa is good for corn-growing or for pasture, the air on high ground is



Cape Town

(The Houses of Parliament. Table Mountain in the background)

particularly fine, and, no doubt, the British settlers thought it an attractive place, with plenty of room for everybody. They pushed eastwards from Cape Town and filled up a newer province of Cape Colony, making Port Elizabeth its chief town.

The Boers greatly resented the abolition of the slave trade in 1833; for the labour of coloured people is much used in South Africa, and Dutch farmers were never

able to get free native labourers who would work so hard or so regularly as slaves had been obliged to do. So, in 1835, all the Boers of the eastern province left their old homes, and, taking their cattle and their goods with them marched away into the wild country beyond the Orange river. This was long remembered as "the Great Trek"; "trek" being the word used in South Africa to describe the slow journey in a bullock-wagon across the open veldt. Many of the Dutch who left Cape Colony settled down in Natal, but they were soon followed by the British, and this territory also was added to the empire. Other Boers, however, remained in the neighbourhood of the Orange river, where they founded the Orange River State; and others, again, set up an independent state not far off, which they called the Transvaal.

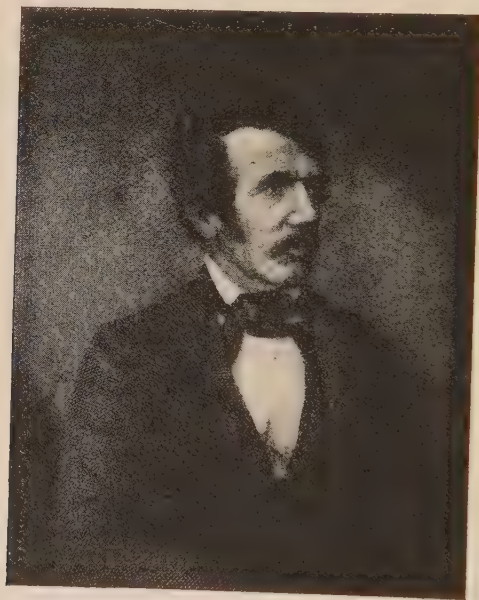
A serious question which both British and Boers had to deal with was that of their relation to the native races. South Africa is unlike both Canada and Australia in having far more coloured people than white colonists, and the result was that for many years war was constantly breaking out between the British and some native tribe. In the earlier half of the century there was a series of struggles with the Kaffirs, who are one of the most numerous of the South African races, and finally a large tract of their land was added to Cape Colony. Later, our government had to help the Boers of the Transvaal against a formidable attack by their black neighbours the Griquas, who seemed to be too strong for them. It happened about the same time that a lot of new settlers of rather doubtful character had hurried into some newly-found diamond mines not far off; so, altogether, this part of the country had got into a state of great disorder.

That was the main reason why the British took over

a district known as Griqualand West ; but a mistake was made in taking over the Transvaal at the same time, without finding out whether the Boers wished it or not. As a matter of fact, although they had been glad of help against the natives, they did not at that time want to be part of the empire. This misunderstanding caused a good deal of trouble later, as we shall see, although it is rapidly being forgotten now. One cause of the confusion may have been that a year or two later our government was occupied with the most serious of its own native wars, that against the Zulus, who were led by their king, Cetewayo. The Zulus are a fine and warlike race, much cleverer than the Kaffirs, and they had had several ambitious rulers, one after the other, who trained them splendidly as soldiers. They conquered all the black neighbouring races, and for a time our own army had all it could do to resist them. Our leaders had not expected any African people to be such good fighters, and were taken aback when British troops suffered a defeat at the hands of Cetewayo's warriors. However, when reinforcements came out from England the Zulus were, of course, beaten before very long, and their country was taken under British protection, though not exactly under British rule. The same thing happened soon afterwards to a district called Basutoland.

During this time no European nation, except ourselves and the original Dutch settlers, had shown any interest in South Africa. It was thought of as a big empty country where corn could be grown and sheep and cattle fed, but no other nation had desired to take part in the work of civilisation. People had shown more interest in other parts of Africa, although not with the idea of colonising them. Sportsmen had gone to certain wild regions to

shoot lions, hippopotomi, or elephants, and to bring back ivory and skins. Explorers, too, had begun, just about the middle of the century, to push their way into the interior, which till then had been an unknown and mysterious land to all white men. But even these travellers were usually of our own nationality.



David Livingstone
(1813-1873)

The most famous of them was David Livingstone, who went out first as a missionary. Starting from Cape Town, he made several bold and successful expeditions northwards, discovering the Victoria falls of the Zambesi river, and, later, the beautiful lake Nyasa with another smaller lake. Like most men who have tasted the excitement of exploring untrodden country, Livingstone was a

wanderer all his life. In the course of almost his last journey he was in great danger, lost in unknown country, when he was rescued by Stanley, one of the best known African explorers of later years. Before his death Livingstone had been over about 29,000 miles of African country, nearly all of it unknown before. He was not by any means the only explorer there, even in his own day, for about the year 1860 others were solving the very old puzzle as to the source of the Nile. But Livingstone was the man who showed the way, and who roused a still keener interest in Africa amongst English people. The results that followed when other nations began in their turn to take the same interest belong to a later period of the nineteenth century.

The truth, indeed, is that the full value of our empire could not be understood until this later period had come. Immense new countries like Canada, south and east Africa and Australia cannot be opened up, as the phrase is, without railways and steamships. Modern inventions for use in mines and upon the land, and a great deal of money to spend, are very useful too ; but railways are the most important of all. Nobody will trouble to grow the huge quantities of corn which the Canadian prairies will produce, or to breed all the cattle that might be fed in South Africa, until there is some quick way of sending their goods to the markets waiting for them in Europe. The parts round the coast of a new country will be cultivated when good roads are made, for over short distances it is worth while to send grain and other things in wagons. But the interior must always wait for railways. We have spoken already of the great change made in Canada by the building of the Canadian Pacific line, and very much the same was sure to happen in Africa. Moreover, this

“Dark Continent,” as it is still sometimes called, appeared to many people to offer greater chances than could be found in North-Western America; and we need not be surprised that this was so. Africa includes many different climates and produces a wonderful variety of valuable things. There is gold to be found, and there are diamonds; ivory is got from elephants in the jungle, and feathers from the ostrich-farms on the veldt; rubber, which is very useful in modern times, and many minerals, come from different parts of the continent. All this is over and above the ordinary farming which goes on in great regions where the climate is good. It would certainly have been strange if other powers besides Great Britain had not come to realise the possibilities of Africa, but by the time they did so our empire had become firmly established in its own territories.

The Lesser Colonies

Besides the great self-governing colonies, Great Britain has, as we have said, many smaller ones associated with it, ruled in various ways, partly by people appointed in this country, partly by others belonging to the colony itself. These possessions lie in all parts of the world; and they have their own special characteristics of climate and soil as well as their own separate history.

It is this extraordinary variety in our empire which makes not only its past but its future so interesting. We may well be glad to think that men of our race have been able to succeed in all these very different surroundings, and have shown themselves capable both of fighting their way to prosperity against the hardships of a new country, and of governing less vigorous peoples in an old

one. Perhaps in time the hopes of some of our statesmen will be fulfilled, and the empire will become an immense league of nations living upon equal terms. In the meanwhile it is satisfactory that this has been



Sugar-cane plantation

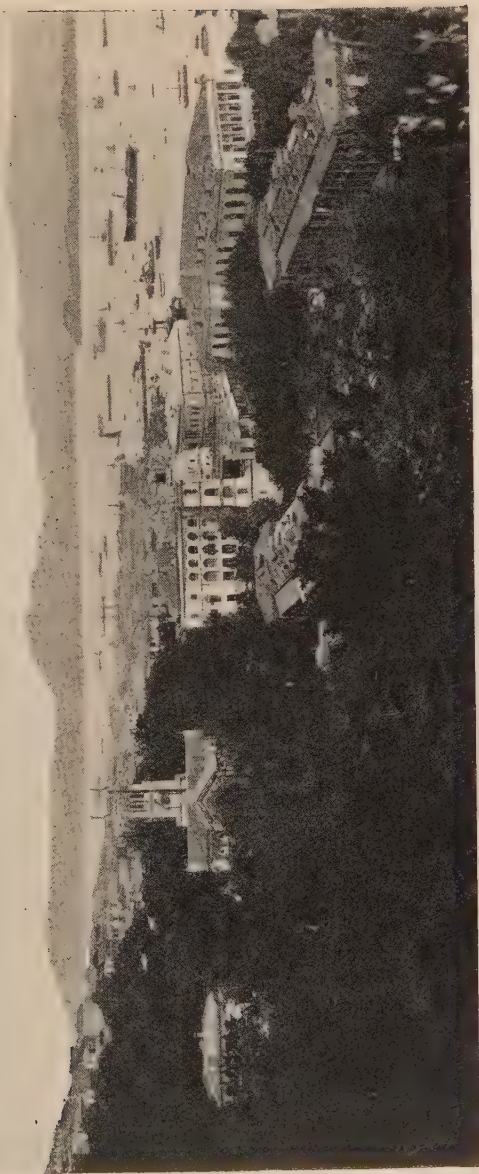
(Cutting the canes in Jamaica)

realised with those great colonies which, especially of late, have drawn so near to the mother country.

If our other over-seas Dominions were not so large, we should certainly think the West Indian islands very important, and so they were considered at the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Barbadoes and Jamaica were even then very old colonies, dating from the time of the Stewart

kings, and others had been gained one by one in later years. The wealth of these beautiful islands lay chiefly in their sugar plantations. These were worked all through the eighteenth century almost entirely by the labour of negro slaves, who were bought in large numbers by the rich planters ; and the first great blow to the prosperity of the colonists came with the abolition of slavery in 1834.

Our countrymen paid, as we know, a huge sum of money to slave-owners when this law was passed ; but what they got did not balance the loss to the planters, who found that they could not make nearly such large fortunes in any other way. The negro population which had grown up in the West Indies could not be induced to work hard for wages, since, owing to the warm climate and fertile soil, they could get all they wanted with very little trouble indeed. However, the colonies might, in time, have adapted themselves to some better system than that of slave labour, if other changes had not come which turned to their disadvantage. One of these was Free Trade, for other parts of the world began to send sugar in large quantities to Great Britain and sell it more cheaply than the West Indian planters could. Some of this, naturally, was grown by the labour of slaves outside the British empire, and was produced cheaply on that account. Besides this, the West Indies suffered very much from the rivalry of countries which grew another kind of sugar called beet sugar. This came largely from France and Germany, and was sold in this country for many years at an extraordinarily low price. So there are many reasons why the West Indian islands have ceased to be very busy or wealthy, and have become places where the inhabitants take life rather easily, and where



The Harbour, Hong-Kong

visitors go largely for the sake of the beautiful climate and scenery.

If these western colonies are old ones, and less important now than they used to be, the opposite is true of our possessions in the Far East, towards China. British influence in this part of the world has grown up almost entirely during the nineteenth century, for at the time of Waterloo we had only a few scattered harbours and an island. But the places which were acquired later had the advantage of being extremely well placed for trade, and they have grown and flourished in an extraordinary way. The island of Singapore, for instance, when it was handed over to us by a Malay rajah, was mainly jungle; now, the town of that name has hundreds of thousands of people in it, and is one of the greatest ports in the world. Hong-Kong has had a somewhat similar history. For many years it was the only place in the Far East which was under a European government, and its safety and freedom attracted an enormous amount of trade.

In the western part of the Pacific, sometimes called the South Seas, British possessions are of a very different kind. They are mainly small islands, not of any great importance, and they have usually been occupied because some other European nation was establishing itself close by, and our government feared some interference with trade.

IX. THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY AND THE PROGRESS OF SCIENCE

THE death of Lord Palmerston in 1865 may be taken as marking the beginning of a new period in the history of our home affairs. Very soon afterwards a new Reform Act was passed, giving votes to a great many more people than had had them under the law of 1832. Then a quite fresh set of questions came forward for discussion in Parliament, and measures were passed which aimed at doing away with many of the old privileges of particular classes of people, and at giving other less fortunate classes a chance to improve their position. The idea slowly grew up that it was the duty of a government to look out for possible ways of doing good, and not simply wait till some change like the Factory Acts or Corn Law Repeal was forced upon it from outside. This went together with a certain falling off in the interest in foreign affairs which had been strong all through the nineteenth century, and especially under Lord Palmerston. Our relations with foreign rulers, and the wars or threats of war which resulted from them, had always been mainly the affair of ministers belonging to great aristocratic families; neither the new working-class voters nor their leaders were, as a rule, much interested in them. All these changes may naturally be dealt with together. They show what we call the growth of democracy, which simply means that more people came to have an interest and a share in the government of the country.

It was not, of course, merely because Lord Palmerston was dead that these ideas began to occupy men's minds. They had often been discussed before, by John Bright amongst others, and it was quite natural that they should gain ground. But Palmerston was almost the last of the ministers known as "the Old Whigs," who strongly disapproved of democracy ; and he had held high positions so long that almost everybody regarded him with respect. His going made room for a minister of a very different type, a man who became the leader of the Liberals for the next thirty years. This was William Ewart Gladstone.

Gladstone had entered the House of Commons as quite a young man, and was then a Tory under the leadership of Sir Robert Peel. He was a great believer in Free Trade ; so, naturally, when his party divided on the question of the abolition of the Corn Laws, he went with the "Peelites." Like others who took this view, Gladstone soon afterwards became a Liberal, and grew into a very keen one.

As it happened, a good many critical questions in different parts of the world had been settled, either for a time or altogether, just before 1865, and this gave the Liberals a much better chance of keeping clear of war than they might otherwise have had. One of these questions was the freedom of Italy. Since 1848, the northern Italians had never really settled down under the rule of Austria, and about ten years later they began to rise in rebellion again, led by their great statesman, Cavour, and by a famous soldier named Garibaldi. This time liberty was won for the whole country except the cities of Rome and Venice, for the bad king of Naples and Sicily was expelled at the same time ; and the Italians now had a ruler of their own choice—Victor Emmanuel,

who had hitherto been king of Sardinia and Piedmont. Another great struggle which came to an end just before 1865 was the American Civil War, which had broken out, as we have seen, over the questions of slave-owning and of the right of certain states to withdraw from the Union. Great Britain had suffered severely through this war, because the cotton which was manufactured in Lancashire came from the Southern states of America, and when the supply ceased nearly all the Lancashire people were thrown out of work.

Some other events of the time were more unfortunate than these. One of them was that Prussia, where an ambitious and unscrupulous minister named Bismarck had just come into power, joined together with Austria to attack the small kingdom of Denmark. Great Britain did not feel strong enough to interfere by herself, and Napoleon III. of France refused to help. Prussia and Austria seized some provinces called Schleswig-Holstein, which they had pretended at first they were going to help to independence, and some other purely Danish territory as well. Prussia was thus beginning the kind of behaviour which in our own century made her a danger to all Europe : and a little later, in 1866, she continued it by seizing a great deal more North-German territory, including Hanover, after a successful war against her late friend and ally, Austria. The French were now beginning to suspect the Prussian danger, but did not do anything to check it ; for their emperor, Napoleon III., seldom acted in the right way at the right time. He had, indeed, stepped in to help the Italians in their struggle for liberty, but had betrayed them in the middle of it for fear that their new kingdom might be too strong. He was supposed, on the whole, to be a great friend of the British government,

but nobody ever felt quite sure that he meant it; and, indeed, on one occasion we came very near war with him. This was because an Italian assassin attacked him with a bomb which, it was discovered, had been made by Italians living in London. Napoleon was very angry, but the British could not feel that this affair was their fault, and the chief result of the war scare was the formation of the Volunteers, who have now developed into our Territorial force. Altogether the French emperor had been a cause of disturbance in Europe, and it was partly because he grew quieter in his later years that the Liberals were able to hope for a long period of peace.

As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gladstone had been busy for some time in taking taxes off things like tea and sugar, paper and tallow. That was, perhaps, the beginning of his popularity, as, naturally, everybody who found that these things could be bought cheaper was pleased with the politician who had brought this about. And, by the Reform Act of 1867, passed by a Conservative government, votes were given to millions of men who had not had them before.

Compulsory Education

The first effect of the new Reform Bill was that next year the Liberals came into power instead of Disraeli's party, and that Gladstone was Prime Minister. Now he had the opportunity to bring forward some of the measures which had been talked of among the Liberals. One of the most important of these was the Education Act of 1870. Since working-men were expected now to make up their minds about political questions and vote

accordingly, the general feeling was that none of the next generation ought to be allowed to grow up ignorant.

The only way to make sure of this was to insist that schools be set up everywhere. There were, as we know, a good many already, built by the Church and Non-conformist Societies, and by private persons, sometimes with the help of the government; but whether there should be a school in any particular village or part of a town depended upon what people thought necessary and felt able to do. By the new law this was changed. It was laid down that in any place where there was no voluntary school, or too small a one for the children of the neighbourhood, a new school must be built, and paid for out of the rates and the pennies paid weekly by the children as fees. Then, as somebody would be needed to manage it, appoint the teachers and raise the money, the Act ordered that what was called a School Board should be elected. These Boards might be large bodies with well-known people serving on them, as in great towns like London, Liverpool, Birmingham and Manchester; or they might be made up of a few people in a village, the doctor, a couple of farmers and a small shopkeeper or two. If the School Board chose, it could order that all the children in their district up to a certain age should attend school whether their parents wanted them to or not. By this first plan it was, of course, left to each town or village to decide whether the children were to be obliged to go to school, since before a School Board was elected the people would know whether the members intended to make this rule or not.

As soon as this law had been passed, the next thing was to find out where the new schools were needed. Inspectors were sent out all over the country to make en-

quiries ; and within a few years tall buildings began to rise at street-corners, or in squares and the quieter thoroughfares where space could be found. In country places, of course, not nearly so many Board Schools were built, since it was easier there and more usual for the Church or Chapel people to have provided education for all the children. But in many small towns and in some villages, new schools were necessary ; the old ones, when there were any, were not interfered with, and Board Schools and Church Schools went on together side by side. It was not very long before a law was passed compelling all parents to send their children to school, and some years afterwards they were given the right to do so without paying any fees.

This compulsory education, as it is called, has made a great difference to the poorer children of Great Britain, and the greatest difference, of course, to the poorest of all. Instead of being sent out to work the whole day when they were only eight or nine years old, they had to spend at any rate some hours in lessons and play. This was good for their health, as well as for their minds, and moreover, in the case of children whose parents were both very poor and very careless, it must often have saved them from drifting into a life on the streets. Even for well-to-do working-class boys and girls, whose parents would have found schooling for them somehow, it was a great advantage to have it both as a right and a duty.

At first, it is true, the teaching was not nearly so interesting as it is now, and as children left at ten or eleven instead of at thirteen or fourteen, they did not learn anything like so much. Many hours were spent over the spelling of long columns of difficult words, and over dull

lessons in arithmetic; there were no magic lanterns, no workshops, no collections of flowers or ferns, very few pictures even on the walls or in the reading-books. But from the day when education became the affair of the whole nation, many able men have given their time to thinking out ways of improving it. As the years went by, new subjects were introduced into the schools, better teachers were sent there, the age of leaving was raised. Besides all this, a system of scholarships was introduced, so that clever children might have a chance of going on to other schools, and to colleges. The great output of cheap books really dates from the years after 1870, and so does the quick growth of all kinds of libraries; these had been set up before in Mechanics' Institutes and other places, but only few working people had ever cared to use them. With the habit of reading there has grown up also a much greater interest in the affairs of other countries; and that is something which ought to help us all not to be narrow-minded or too self-satisfied.

The Ballot

Another measure brought forward by Gladstone was the Ballot Act, and this was a consequence of the Reform Law even more directly than compulsory education had been. It provided that at elections a man should give his vote by marking a paper and dropping it into a box, instead of saying aloud the name of the candidate he was voting for. The purpose of this, of course, was that nobody should know the name except himself. It was not always easy for a workman to vote openly for one party if his employer was very anxious that he should

vote for the other ; and the same was true of a small tradesman amongst his customers, or sometimes of a doctor amongst his patients. The greater the number of people who took part in elections, the more necessary it was for them to be able to follow their real opinions quite freely, without fear of consequences or hope of reward ; and most Liberals thought this could be done only by making the voting secret. John Bright was specially keen in his support of this measure. “ Whether I look,” he said in one speech, “ to the excessive cost of elections, or to the tumult which so often attends them, or to the unjust and cruel pressure which is so frequently brought to bear upon the less independent class of electors, I am persuaded that the true interest of the public and of freedom would be served by the system of secret and free voting.”

Gladstone himself was not quite so sure about his feeling in the matter, and a passage of his diary at the time records that he supported the Ballot Act “ with mind satisfied but with a lingering reluctance.” However, this is not at all surprising, for there is always something unattractive in the notion of secrecy ; and in public the Prime Minister declared that in his view “ by whatever means, free voting must be secured.” So the Ballot Act was passed, and undoubtedly did away with a great deal of bribery and wrong influence at elections. Some of the people who objected to it had been afraid that much more would result than this, and that when the new voters were quite free to do as they pleased they would always elect Radical candidates everywhere. However, this was not the case, and as far as the two parties were concerned, nobody was able to see much difference.

Army Reform after the Franco-German War

Considering that the Liberals believed strongly and sincerely in keeping the peace, it seems curious that one important part of their work at this time was concerned with the army. This arose chiefly from the fact that in 1870 a great war broke out between France and Prussia. Great Britain had no part in it, but at one time people thought that she might have; and in any case nobody could be sure that her turn for being obliged to fight would not come next.

The Prussian minister Bismarck was continuing his policy of provoking war with any country he thought Germany could overpower. He deliberately worked for the quarrel with France, and as neither Napoleon III. nor his people were properly prepared for war, they were defeated by the Germans after a comparatively short struggle. One French army was surrounded and captured at Metz within a few weeks of the outbreak of war, and another soon afterwards at Sedan; this second army might have escaped into Belgium, but the French were too honourable to do this, because they had promised that no soldiers should cross the Belgian frontier. Then came the long and dreadful siege of Paris from September to January, and when peace was declared soon afterwards, France agreed to give up the two provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, as well as to pay a huge sum of money. The Emperor Napoleon, who had served his country badly, was deposed, and France became a republic once more. Just at the same time the king of Prussia was made German emperor, for all the south German states, such as Bavaria and Würtemberg, now agreed to join the northern group in forming a united empire.

This victory over France, and the fact that their union had made them strong, convinced the Germans more firmly than ever that they were the leading people of Europe. They now set to work with great success to make themselves a great commercial nation as well as what they were already, a learned and a musical one. But all the time they went on regarding their army as more important than anything else, and as the means by which they would some day extend their power still further. This detestable view of things, taken first by the government and then taught to the people, became more and more firmly rooted in Germany as time went by. The emperor crowned in 1871 was the grandfather of the one who, with his advisers, must be held responsible for the outbreak of war in the summer of 1914.

There was one good result in Europe, however, from the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, and that was the union of Rome with the rest of Italy. Venice had been handed over by Austria a few years earlier, and it was only an army kept in Rome by Napoleon III. which had prevented that city and its territories from being joined to Victor Emmanuel's kingdom of Italy. Now, the French soldiers had to be withdrawn, and the Pope could not resist the people's King any longer. And in our own country, as we have just said, the reform of the army system was taken in hand partly as a result of the war, so it had its good side for us also.

Everybody had been much struck by the extremely good management and training of the Prussian troops both in 1866 and in 1870, and it was natural to wonder whether we could not learn something for ourselves from their ways of doing things. We did not want to adopt the arrangement by which every fit man in the country

had to serve for two or three years in the army. That dated in Prussia from the days when she had to make a tremendous effort to free herself from the tyranny of the great Napoleon, and it did not appear necessary for a nation living in an island and protected by a powerful fleet. But the idea of having a reserve of soldiers who could be called up in addition to those actually with the colours was clearly a good one. Until then we had had no such thing, for British soldiers enlisted for twenty years, and then very naturally left the army for ever. So the secretary of state for war, whose name was Cardwell, introduced a plan by which a man would enlist for twelve years, serving seven of them with the colours, and then serving five in the reserve. In this way the men actually in barracks or sent to India were always the youngest, but there were plenty of reservists only a few years older who did work of other kinds for their living, and yet were ready at any time to join the ranks again if they were needed. This was found to work much better than the old plan by which all soldiers were kept on till well past middle age ; and far more new recruits were now secured.

Another reform made at the same time concerned officers. For a long while the government sold a commission in the army to almost any one rich enough to want it and buy it. Very naturally most of the young officers who began in this way knew nothing about their work before they began. Nobody except a rich man had any chance of a commission save in a few special branches of the service, and this, of course, shut out many who might have shown great capacity. There was a hard struggle over the abolition of this system, but Cardwell and Gladstone managed it in the end. And the reform was, undoubtedly, the beginning of a great advance in the

training of British officers. They now had to pass an examination to get into the army, and afterwards to study all sorts of subjects connected with their profession, from gunnery and musketry to judging the quality of the men's dinner. Old-fashioned people prophesied all sorts of dreadful consequences from making young officers pass examinations; but none of these came about, and the subalterns were just as brave and as sportsmanlike as they had been before. Indeed, very much more was to be done in the same direction some thirty years later, with the results we all see in our splendid army of to-day.

The Progress of Science

Side by side with changes of this kind, brought about by statesmen in Parliament, there were others during the same period which came as a natural result of discoveries in different branches of science. Most of these changes were very practical ones, affecting the life of great numbers of men and women. Others were changes in theories or beliefs, making a difference in the way people looked at the world about them. Both, however, did their share in bringing our country forward towards modern conditions—more like the Great Britain we know now.

Surgery and Medicine

Amongst practical changes perhaps the progress in surgery and medicine since the early nineteenth century was the most important of all. This progress has never stopped; since 1870 wonderful discoveries have been made, and the skill of our surgeons and physicians has

increased in an extraordinary way. But between the time when Queen Victoria came to the throne and Dickens was



Sir James Young Simpson

(1811-1870)

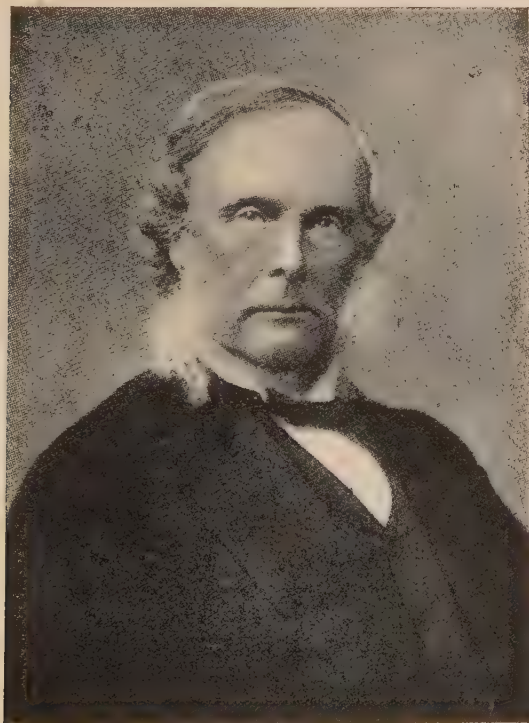
beginning to write his novels, and the time when Gladstone was in power and Board Schools were being built in all parts of the country, work had been done which was to

lessen the sufferings of innumerable human beings all over the world. About the year 1844 one or two dentists had begun to experiment, in America first of all, with the fumes of a drug called ether, to make people insensible while their teeth were being drawn. This was a valuable discovery so far as it went, but, shortly afterwards, a greater one was made in Scotland by a professor at the University of Edinburgh. This Dr Simpson, afterwards Sir James Simpson, found another more powerful drug called chloroform, which could be breathed in by people about to undergo a surgical operation, and which would make them perfectly unconscious while the most serious things were done to them. The advantage of this was so great that chloroform quickly came into use in all civilised countries.

It was not only a question of sparing the patient pain, though that, in itself, was immensely important. Before the discovery of anæsthetics, as these drugs are called, a workman who had an accident, or a soldier who was wounded, might have to endure the cutting off of his arm or leg in full consciousness of what was being done. Sometimes the surgeons would make him drunk to spare him some of the pain, but this was of very little use. Besides this, however, the practice of giving chloroform made it possible to perform many operations which could never have been done before, and so to cure a great many distressing complaints. Numbers of people who now get perfectly well would have died or been permanent invalids under the old conditions, because they could not have borne the pain of the operation necessary to cure them. With the freedom given them by knowing they are not hurting their patients surgeons have been able to find out all sorts of wonderful ways of attacking disease.

For more than twenty years after the discovery of

chloroform, however, it seemed as though full advantage could not be taken of it because of the difficulty in getting the wounds of operations to heal up healthily. Nobody could make out exactly why they did not do



Joseph, Baron Lister
(1827-1912)

so. The first idea naturally was that dirt of some kind must usually get into them; so the most careful precautions were taken about scrubbing and cleaning in hospitals, and about opening the windows to let in plenty of fresh air. Then it was thought that, perhaps, it was

a sort of infection hanging about old buildings. So new hospitals were built; but patients still died in great numbers from the blood-poisoning which came on when their wounds did not heal. At last there came the discovery which helped matters forward wonderfully. An English medical man named Lister had been working at this subject for years, and in 1867 he began to make public what he had found out.

Lister was a native of Essex, educated at Quaker schools and afterwards at London university; but it was while he was at Glasgow, working in the hospitals there, that he began to turn his attention to the question of poison in wounds. The theories of the great French scientist Pasteur were most helpful to him, and by following them Lister reached the conclusion that the poisoning was caused by "germs" or "microbes," which found their way into wounds. These microbes were invisible; they might be carried on the hands or clothes of the surgeon, the nurses, or the patient himself; and ordinary cleanliness was not nearly enough to ensure that none were there. Lister set himself to work out the way to destroy these microbes; and under his direction there grew up a wonderful system of what is called "antiseptic" surgery, under which everything which comes anywhere near the patient's wound is purified by boiling or other methods. This system was not completed in the period about 1870, but the most important steps were taken, and the sick began at once to benefit from Lister's invaluable discovery. The chief danger which had attended most operations had gone; hospital patients recovered quickly instead of dying or suffering for weeks from fever or other disease. By the year 1875 it was so well understood what Lister had achieved that he was greeted with the keenest en-

thusiasm in the cities of Germany and France, and all through a tour he made in these countries festivals were held in his honour. In later life he was awarded many high distinctions at home, being made first a baronet, then a peer, and also one of the first members of the Order of Merit. But, as has been very truly said, it was not his own countrymen alone who owed gratitude to Lord Lister, but men and women everywhere who had been saved by his discoveries from suffering or death.

Electricity

On a quite different side of life, the growing knowledge of the uses of electricity had made some change by about the year 1870. The telegraph, indeed, which was a very valuable invention, dates back twenty or thirty years before that. At the time when Queen Victoria came to the throne it was unknown in Great Britain, although a few experiments had been made abroad. But two men in London, one a professor at King's college, were working upon the idea of sending signals by means of an electric current along a wire, and they soon proved that it could be done with success. The first public telegraph in England was opened in 1844. It worked between Paddington and Slough, a distance of about twenty miles ; but it was very quickly followed by others, until the posts and wires which are a familiar sight to us nowadays began to appear along every main road and railway. The electric current conveyed by the wires acts upon an instrument which makes certain dots and dashes on a piece of paper. These, according to a code of signals arranged beforehand, stand for particular letters of the alphabet, so that in this

way the operator at a telegraph office in Manchester or Liverpool can spell out a message which is being sent from London or Bristol, or anywhere else. When we hand in our written telegrams they are translated, as it were, into these signals ; and then they are written out again at the other end, and sent in envelopes to the persons to whom they are addressed.

It must always seem very wonderful, when we think it over, that messages can be conveyed in this way over hundreds of miles of country, without any interruption by weather or anything else, unless the telegraph-wires are actually broken down by snow or storms. And this invention certainly made a great difference to ordinary life in England, especially in matters of business. Everybody, of course, knows the convenience of being able to send or get news, or ask a question and receive the answer from hundreds of miles away, all within a couple of hours or less. But to people who are constantly buying and selling, ordering goods in great quantities, or arranging the terms of contracts, the electric telegraph has meant much more than this. It has increased the speed of business so much that it has increased the amount of it too ; for to be able to do things quickly usually means doing them more cheaply, and that is profitable both to those who sell and those who buy. And if this is true of the inland telegraph, it is still more true of what seems a greater wonder, the cable, or telegraph wires conveying messages under the sea.

The idea of attempting this arose as early as 1840 ; but nothing was done for ten years, and even then the cable which was laid between Dover and Calais broke after a few messages had been sent. The great difficulty of course was to protect the telegraph wires properly, since

they had to be always under water. For this purpose, after the early failures, the cable was surrounded first with gutta-percha, then with tarred hemp, then with galvanised iron wire. A few protected in this way were laid in different parts of the world, but usually for rather short distances, and when, a few years later, people wanted to have a telegraph cable between Great Britain and America, one great difficulty in the matter was the enormous weight of the length required to cross the Atlantic ocean. The vessel which did actually succeed in carrying and laying an Atlantic cable was a battleship, the *Agamemnon*, the first which



Steamships setting out from Dover to lay the first submarine cable
between England and France

was built to be driven by screw instead of paddle. Unfortunately, after this first cable had been used for a short time it ceased to act, although nobody knew exactly why. This was so discouraging that nothing more was done for several years; and then, in 1865, another attempt was made by the *Great Eastern*, a huge passenger steamship built at this time, but found too costly for such use. The *Great Eastern*, on her first cable-laying voyage, had got only two-thirds of the way across when the cable broke; but next year she reached New York successfully, and from that time onwards telegrams have passed regularly

and constantly between this country and America. It followed of course that other cables were laid in all oceans, and in this way we in an island can hear within a few hours what has happened in all the most distant parts of the earth.

Charles Darwin and his Theory of Evolution

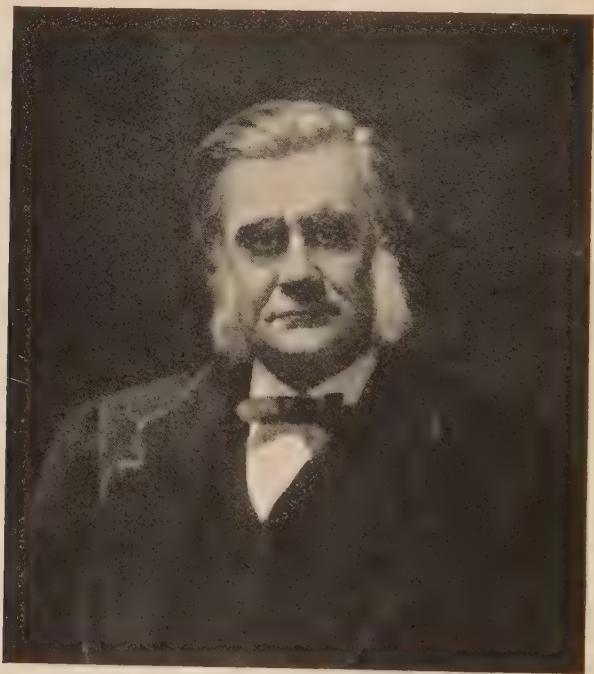
While these wonderful inventions were being made by men whose interests lay in this direction, one of the most famous scientists who ever lived was working steadily along an altogether different line. This was Charles Darwin, who spent a long life in the close study of plants and animals, and in forming a new theory as to how the different kinds and species of them came into existence. The old idea was that every kind of animal, bird, or fish in the world had been from the beginning exactly what it is now. But Darwin's view was that one species may change into another, and that just as some old kinds of animals have disappeared altogether, so many which we have now did not exist at first, but have been developed gradually out of earlier forms. Improved breeds of animals and more beautiful kinds of flowers are produced now in a comparatively short time by stock-owners and gardeners ; Nature, working through the ages, developed different or higher types of some primitive animal until an altogether new species was produced. Darwin's theory went beyond this and pointed out the way in which he thought these variations might have come about. It threw a flood of light upon all sorts of difficult questions of natural history, and was supported by an immense mass of evidence which Darwin had got together by his observations in many

parts of the world. This theory of "Evolution," brought about by "Natural Selection," formed a new starting-point for the study of botany, of biology and of other sciences as well.

It was a rather remarkable fact that this new view of natural history was formed by another scientist almost exactly at the same time. While Darwin, in the June of 1858, was busily working at the book he afterwards called *The Origin of Species*, he was interrupted by the arrival of an essay sent by a friend. This was Alfred Russel Wallace, who was then living in the Malay archipelago, and the essay he had written contained almost exactly the same conclusions which Darwin had gradually reached. As neither Wallace nor Darwin would consent to take any credit which belonged to the other, a paper written jointly appeared after this in a scientific journal. But Darwin was the one who devoted himself more completely to establishing the theory; his books were read all through the country, while Wallace had put his views into a short paper intended for scientists only. Darwin's name will always be connected with this great change in thought and advance in knowledge; but he was always eager to recognise that another man had done much of the same work as himself. "Most persons," he wrote in a letter to Wallace, "would in your position have felt some envy or jealousy. How nobly free you seem to be of this common failing of mankind! But you speak far too modestly of yourself. You would, if you had had the leisure, have done the work just as well as, perhaps better than, I have done it."

Although nobody who had not a considerable knowledge of science could follow closely all the arguments for Darwin's theories, still, in a general way, his conclusions

became known to almost everyone. They were so striking as to add greatly to the general interest in science, which was already growing strong. Darwin's was not the only great name of this period. Huxley was another well-known scientist, and although he made no such great



Thomas Henry Huxley

(1825-1895)

change in thought as Darwin did, he wrote many valuable books in a very vigorous and attractive style. The spread of knowledge of such subjects as biology and botany encouraged the idea that they might also be taught to as many young people as possible in colleges and schools.

London university, which had been founded about the year 1840, had devoted itself particularly to science from the beginning, and its example was very widely followed in the last quarter of the century.

It happened just about the same time that the chances of education for both boys and girls were very much increased. The School Boards in large towns were eager to provide teaching for children beyond the age of twelve or thirteen, and they set up what were called higher-grade and higher elementary schools. Girls' high schools were also beginning to appear, and Owens' college, established in Manchester, became the first of the provincial universities, which are open to young people of both sexes. In all of these it seemed fitting to teach a great deal more of natural science than of the Latin and Greek to which time was given in older schools and universities. Even the children in elementary schools were taught the beginnings of the same subjects, with the idea that they ought to know as much as possible of the structure of their own bodies and of the world about them. In later years, however, this kind of education has taken its place amongst others, instead of being considered specially important. Real study of science is, of course, amongst the best work that can be done, but not very many people have the time or the ability to undertake it.

The spread of this interest fortunately went together with much greater care as to health and cleanliness, because people began better to understand and to realise their importance. Just before the middle of the century a law was passed which gave government the right to insist on certain measures necessary for health, such as clearing away dirt and dust, and avoiding anything

which causes unwholesome smells. More and more was done under Acts of this kind as time went by. Town Councils and District Councils were made responsible for the state of things in their own neighbourhoods ; doctors were appointed as Medical Officers to look after such matters as preventing the spread of infectious diseases, vaccinating babies against smallpox, and insisting on good drainage and good water. We, who live in days when all this is a matter of course, find it hard to realise from how much misery we are saved by rules and precautions as to health. Early in the nineteenth century, smallpox and typhus fever were quite common complaints ; frequently several children out of a family would die of one or the other, especially smallpox. Grown-up people as well as babies were often ill with fevers which nobody had a name for, but which were really caused by dirt or poisonous water. There can be no doubt that by doing away with much suffering, modern science has increased immensely the happiness of the nation.

X. QUIET AT HOME AND TROUBLE IN IRELAND

AFTER the many reforms of the years between 1867 and 1873, there followed a time when people in England apparently wanted to be quiet, to postpone any further big changes, and to get accustomed to those which had been made. At a general election they put the Conservatives in power, and Disraeli thus became Prime Minister instead of Gladstone. Nobody wanted to go too far in any direction, and they thought that a Conservative government would prevent this.

The feeling was strengthened by the fact that except for some of the farmers, who were beginning to suffer from the opening up of the new countries, Great Britain was just then very prosperous. Manufacturers were flourishing, and paid good wages to their workmen. The Civil War in America a few years earlier had been of advantage to some branches of our trade. The Americans could not manufacture very much while fighting was going on, and could do still less of what had been a most profitable occupation—carrying goods about the world in their ships. A great deal of business had passed over to Great Britain at this time, and some of it never went back. One of the few striking things done by Disraeli in the first year or two of his government was at once a result of the great prosperity of shipping, and a cause of its becoming more prosperous still. It was the purchase of a half share in the Suez canal. This canal, as a glance at the map

will show, was one of the most important works of the kind ever carried out, since it completely changed a great trade route; ships bound for the East could now go by the Red Sea instead of round the Cape of Good Hope. The Suez canal had been constructed by a French engineer and was in the hands of a French company, while the native ruler of Egypt kept some control over it; but it was not



The Suez Canal

(On the right is one of the steam dredgers used for keeping the waterway clear)

being well managed, and as three-fourths of the ships passing through it were British, Disraeli naturally thought we ought to have some share in the ownership. Luckily, the Egyptian ruler ran short of money, and the British government cabled an offer of four millions of pounds for an equal share in the canal. This bargain gave Great Britain new influence in Egypt, and at the same time was

very profitable, for the Suez canal became more and more valuable to its owners as time went by.

But if in England itself there was a good deal of prosperity and peace, in other parts of the empire various troubles arose not long after the year 1875. One problem, indeed, was quite familiar, as we shall see if we turn back a little ; but it was none the easier to deal with on that account. This was the management of Ireland, which had been a source of difficulty since long before the days of O'Connell. The terrible famine of 1846 and the emigration that followed it had, indeed, exhausted the country so much that for some time there was very little disturbance, and this, no doubt, was partly the reason why the troubled year 1848 passed over without any dangerous rebellion. But some twenty years afterwards there had been a serious outbreak, just at the time when in England the second Reform Bill was being passed and Gladstone was settling down afterwards to make changes with the support of the new voters.

This outbreak was called the "Fenian" movement, from a very old Irish word meaning the soldiers of a tribe. It began after the close of the American Civil war, when thousands of Irishmen who had been living in the United States were set free from the armies. Many of them thought that they had reason for indignation against England, for as children, after the famine, they had been brought away from their own country, leaving her in a state of misery which, as they thought, might have been prevented by better government. Now these Irishmen were trained soldiers, thrown on the world for the moment with nothing particular to do ; and it struck a number of them as a splendid opportunity of making trouble for Great Britain. Some hurried over to Ireland to enrol

men in "the Fenian Brotherhood," others stayed behind to make raids over the border from the United States into Canada.

The "Brotherhood" grew rapidly in Ireland, and in the United States, too, some thousands of men were found to attack Canada. But, fortunately, the Fenians failed to achieve any success on a large scale. The Irish rebellion broke out only in separate places one after the other, instead of all over the country at the same time; and the Canadians easily beat back their invaders. As a matter of fact, it was in England itself that the Fenians attracted most attention, since what happens close to us is apt to be startling. Thus, about 1500 Irishmen from Liverpool collected secretly at Chester with the idea of seizing military stores and weapons there, although they were dispersed by the police and troops without carrying out their scheme. The attempts at rescuing prisoners, one of which was successful, caused more excitement still. An attack was made on a prison van in the streets of Manchester, resulting in the escape of a Fenian prisoner; and in London, part of Clerkenwell jail was wickedly blown up with gunpowder, a crime which caused the death of many innocent people.

These outrages could be checked without much difficulty, and it was only a small number of men who ever actually took part in them. But as showing the feeling of the Irish nation, and in their effect on the British, they were very important. The greater part of Ireland was not content to be ruled by a Parliament in London; O'Connell had loudly demanded a separate one in Dublin, and now the Fenian leaders were declaring for an entirely independent government and no connection with England at all. As for ordinary people in Great Britain, most of them probably

waked up for the first time in the "Fenian" days to the fact that Irish discontent was serious, and that something might have to be done about it. Gladstone said afterwards that in his opinion it was only "when a sense of insecurity went abroad far and wide" that the English people were really roused to face the Irish question.



The Bank of Ireland

By this he did not mean that they were anxious to give way to the Fenians for fear of what such men would do. On the contrary, many people in this country were so angry about these outrages and others of later days, that they were most bitterly opposed to giving the Irish anything they wanted. But throughout the last thirty years of the century British people were more or less divided

into two parties, one of which believed in giving the Irish the independence they asked for, while the other believed in ruling them from Great Britain for their own good. An immense difficulty has always been that the Irish were not agreed amongst themselves. There is one part of the country, the province of Ulster, which has never been willing to join with the rest; the people are Protestants while the others are Roman Catholics, and the former have always thought it better to be united with Great Britain than to have Ireland independent and be the smaller party there themselves. The great difference of opinion in England has been as to whether the wishes of this one important province ought to be sacrificed to those of the rest of Ireland, or whether the rest of Ireland ought to give way to Ulster.

From the time when Gladstone became Prime Minister in 1868 he made up his mind that something, at any rate, must be done to improve the state of Ireland. To that determination he kept all his life, trying first one measure and then another, sometimes changing his view as to what would be best, but in the end sacrificing a great deal to this one aim. The Irish discontent was due not only to the want of a separate Parliament; there were other causes for it as well. One was that a large part of the land was owned by absentee landlords, as they were called, who collected high rents, and were hardly ever seen in the country. The tenants had miserable little holdings where they lived in tumble-down cabins and could barely scrape a living out of the soil. If they made any improvements on their little bit of a farm, the landlord often raised the rent and turned them out if they did not pay. Irish peasants in very old days had had a right to stay on their little holdings, paying rent as they could, but never being

turned out ; this was the plan they thought right, and, indeed, with the land very much divided up, it was the only one which seemed fair. Another cause of ill-feeling was that Protestantism had been established as the national religion of Ireland, while most of the people were Roman Catholics. This Established Church was called "the Church of Ireland," but, as a matter of fact, comparatively few people attended it; and the others thought it unjust that the Protestant clergy should be held in any way superior to their own Roman Catholic priests.

Both these questions were attacked by Gladstone during his period of power after 1868. He managed with great difficulty to pass a law through Parliament which put the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches on an equality in Ireland; and his Land Act provided that tenants, if they were turned off their farms, should have something paid to them for any improvements they had made. Unfortunately this last measure did not go far enough to content the Irish peasants, and there was still a great deal of disorder, stirred up chiefly by the Fenians, which had to be put down with severity. Then, when Disraeli took office in his turn, the prospect of anything being done to satisfy the peasants became very small, since the Conservatives were the party who thought it would be a fatal weakness to go on in this direction. The result was that a new movement began amongst the Irish, carried on this time by the members who came to represent them in Parliament at Westminster. This plan was to prevent, so far as possible, any business being done in the House of Commons until a measure was brought in to give Ireland a separate Parliament, or, as it was now beginning to be called, Home Rule. The Irish members

were led by a man of great strength of character, Charles Stewart Parnell.

Parnell was the first leader of real ability that the Irish had had since O'Connell, and his party followed him in absolute obedience. He was silent, self-controlled, often very bitter, and he knew exactly what he wanted to do. Under the rules of the House of Commons it was possible for any group of members to waste an immense amount of time in long speeches which could not be stopped; this was what the Irish were directed to do, and did, day after day, all through the years from 1877 to 1880. The plan was of course intensely irritating to everybody, but especially to Disraeli's government, who had already had some troublesome matters to settle. There had been fighting between the Turks and their subjects in the Balkan peninsula, arising, as usual, out of the horribly bad government of the Turkish empire. Russia, of course, was interested in the matter, being anxious to protect the people of her own race in the Balkans; and the first idea of Disraeli and the other ministers was to go on as we had done in the time of the Crimean war, and support the sultan against the czar; but the cruelty of the Turks while putting down a rising of the Bulgarians was so abominable that this policy could not in the end be carried out. Gladstone made a series of stirring speeches on what were known as "the Bulgarian atrocities," and the government had to promise that we should not do anything merely for the sake of helping Turkey. All the same, after the Russians and Turks had been at war for a time, Disraeli, or Lord Beaconsfield as he was by then, did make a sort of undertaking to protect the Turks in part of their dominions and to see that they made some reforms. Unfortunately the Turks

never had the smallest intention of treating their Christian subjects any better, and only went on making promises in order to save themselves trouble.

After all these difficulties abroad, the Conservative government found it very trying to have Parnell and his party interfering with everything that was done at home. The electors had got the idea by now that they had an unlucky ministry, and just as they had been very much afraid of the Liberals seven years before, so they were thoroughly tired of the Conservatives now. Nobody was surprised when Gladstone came into power again in 1880 with a strong party behind him in the House of Commons. But the Irish difficulty remained, growing steadily worse, and the Liberal leader was never free of it from this time until, as a very old man, he retired from politics altogether.

If there had been nothing worse than the delays in the House of Commons it would not have mattered nearly so much, and perhaps the dislike of Home Rule would have died down, even amongst the Conservatives. But unhappily, at the same time, many shocking crimes were committed in Ireland, and these were not discouraged by the leaders of the peasantry. A big association called the Land League had now been started to press for changes in the law, and it was strongly suspected in England that when landlords or their agents were shot at, or new tenants robbed by old ones they had replaced, the chiefs of the Land League secretly approved of it. All this made the question of Irish government, as Gladstone himself said, the most difficult he had known during the thirty-seven years since he first entered a Cabinet. These wicked outrages could not be allowed to go on, and the bitter feeling they roused made

it difficult to do much to remove Irish grievances. And yet it was quite certain that there were grievances, which were among the main causes of the disturbance. Gladstone himself was not yet convinced in 1880 that there ought to be a separate Parliament in Dublin, but he had no doubt at all that much more should be done to give tenants a claim on their land.

The only course appeared to be to try both measures at once ; an act, called a Coercion Act, to give the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland special powers to put almost anybody he chose in prison ; and a Land Act, which set up a Court to decide when rents were unfairly high, and to reduce them. Although this Court gave relief to great numbers of poor tenants, it did not satisfy the Land League, and Parnell, with some of his friends, who were in prison at the time, issued public advice to the peasants to refuse to pay rent at all. Upon this, the Land League was suppressed by the government, but the outrages grew worse and worse. In Galway, about this time, the number of police was extraordinary, and yet no land-agent could feel his life to be safe. At last, Gladstone offered to let Parnell out of prison if he would try to restore order in Ireland ; and something might have come of this if there had not been a shocking case of unprovoked murder almost directly afterwards. The new Chief Secretary, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and the Under-secretary, who was with him, were attacked and killed by a party of ruffians in Phœnix Park, Dublin.

Everybody was furiously indignant at this, and the murder was, of course, punished as it deserved. Those who opposed every effort to satisfy the Irish were inclined to take the crime as a new proof that they were right ; but Gladstone was slowly coming to believe that

only the power of governing themselves would really end Irishmen's discontent. During the next two or three years he became convinced of this; other statesmen of all parties had appeared at times to hold the same view, but had never finally declared it. Parnell and his followers, believing that Gladstone would give them Home Rule now, joined him against the Conservatives, and this, in itself, helped to make a good many Englishmen fear that Home Rule Liberals were in the wrong. It was in the year 1886 that Gladstone found he had lost his former overwhelming support in the country, and also several of his old fellow-ministers and supporters. Just as Sir Robert Peel, forty years earlier, had split his party in the attempt to abolish the Corn Laws, so Gladstone split his in trying to give Home Rule to Ireland. The general election was won by the Conservatives, who were now joined by several leading men from the Liberal side. Amongst these one of the best known was Joseph Chamberlain, who in his early days had been much more Radical than Gladstone himself. The Liberals who left their party upon the Home Rule question never came back, and the result was that for the next twenty years, with one short interval, the Unionists, or Conservatives, were in a majority and formed the government.

Their plan with regard to Ireland was, at first, simply to put down all disorder with a strong hand. But the Irish members still went on demanding Home Rule, the Irish people went on electing members in favour of it, the peasants went on hating a system which, as they believed, robbed them of their rights in the land. In later years, the Unionists passed an Act to help tenants to buy their farms, and did many other things to improve the condition of the country. The result was that the Irish grew much

more contented and prosperous, but they never ceased to ask for a Home Rule Act giving them a separate Parliament of their own.

XI. AFRICAN AFFAIRS

DURING the last twenty years of the century, while in most parts of the world our country's affairs went smoothly enough, there was constantly some disturbance or excitement in one part or another of Africa. Events there had their effect also on our feelings towards other nations in Europe, and on theirs towards us ; but this did not appear till afterwards, and, in the meantime, African affairs themselves were enough to occupy a good deal of attention.

The Boers of the Transvaal were the first cause of difficulty. Their country had been taken into our empire some years before, chiefly because the British had had to help them against native enemies. Now, when these natives were no longer a danger to them, the Boers made up their minds that they would rather be independent ; and the British government promised to look into the matter. Unluckily, before any arrangements had been made, fighting broke out between the Boers and a British force which had hurried forward to put down any attempts at rebellion ; and our troops were defeated at the battle of Majuba hill. The government went on in spite of this, and agreed that the Transvaal should be practically independent. But in the final arrangement the British insisted on a promise from the Boer government that all white men should be free to live and trade in the Trans-

vaal, and should pay no more taxes than the Boers did. That was a part of the bargain which became very important later on.

About a year after the settlement of this quarrel, serious disturbances broke out at the other end of Africa. Ever since Disraeli's purchase of the Suez canal shares our government, working together with that of France, had had a good deal of influence in Egypt. The native rulers there were supposed to owe some sort of obedience to Turkey, and they appeared also to have copied many Turkish habits of government. The khedive, Ismail by name, got the Egyptian finances into shocking disorder, and was then obliged to resign. His son and successor was not so bad, but he inherited his father's difficulties, and the officials and tax-collectors simply robbed poor people as they chose, and exacted large sums from richer ones by threats of using their power against them. These officials and the native Egyptian army objected very much to "the Dual Control," as the guardianship of France and Great Britain was called, and at last an officer named Arabi pasha headed a revolt against it, kidnapped the young khedive, and drove the British and French ministers out of the country.

Although our government was certainly not anxious for war in Egypt, it did not seem possible to leave things alone. The Suez canal was of immense value to the whole world; great numbers of Europeans lived in Cairo and Alexandria; while the Egyptian people were not in the least united in support of Arabi pasha, so there was terrible disorder in the country, made worse rather than better by Turkish interference. A part of our fleet was ordered to Alexandria, and while it lay there a dreadful riot broke out in the city, Europeans were murdered, and



Cairo

houses plundered. As the rioters then proceeded to fortify the place, the British admiral, after giving due notice, opened a bombardment. Our men were then landed in Alexandria, and action had thus been taken which it was necessary to follow up. Gladstone and his colleagues were keenly anxious that France should share in the work of restoring order in Egypt. But the French people had reasons which seemed to them very strong for keeping out of the whole affair. Germany, Austria and Russia were all three at that time friends and allies, and France had good cause to distrust this "League of the three Emperors," mainly controlled as it was by the Prussian minister Bismarck. Frenchmen naturally feared that if their army was occupied in Africa, Germany would seize the opportunity to attack them. The result was that Great Britain determined to deal with Egypt alone. Gladstone spoke on this subject in the House of Commons several times during the summer of 1882. "We should not fully discharge our duty," he said once, "if we did not endeavour to convert the present interior state of Egypt from anarchy and conflict to peace and order. We shall look during the time that remains to us to the co-operation of the Powers of civilised Europe, if it be in any case open to us. But if every chance of obtaining co-operation is exhausted, the work will be undertaken by the single power of England."

The actual struggle with Arabi and his followers did not last long. Sir Garnet Wolseley was in command of our force, and he soon succeeded in taking the Egyptians by surprise. While they were expecting him to come out from Alexandria, he suddenly seized the Suez canal, and then marched with his British and Indian troops across the desert towards Cairo. He caught Arabi with his

army at Tel-el-Kebir and completely defeated him. Soon afterwards the chief rebels were exiled to Ceylon, and the khedive was restored to his throne. A British army of occupation was, however, left in the country, on the understanding that it would be taken away "when order and good government were restored."

Very possibly it might have been, although the khedive's government was not likely to be very good, if a new trouble had not already broken out, further south, in the Soudan. That territory was under the authority of Egyptian officials, and was even more abominably robbed and misgoverned than the native Egyptians were. At last some Arab tribes had made up their minds to be free of this tyranny. Unfortunately, however, the rising was headed by a man who, believing in certain mad religious doctrines, thought that he was called to the conquest of the whole world. This belief turned his followers into desperate fighters, and caused some confusion in other ways.

The Egyptian government very naturally disliked the idea of giving up this part of its dominions, from which much money had been exacted. But the khedive had no army strong enough to hold it, and a British general who was serving with the khedive was despatched with a weak native force into the Soudan. The "Mahdi," as the Arab leader called himself, fell upon this force with his fierce soldiery and destroyed it. The whole situation was thus made much worse than before.

The British government then decided, though rather unwillingly, to send some one from home to direct the business of bringing the remaining Egyptian troops out of the Soudan. Their advisers in Cairo were against this, but people in England pressed the policy very eagerly. The choice eventually fell upon General Gordon, a fearless

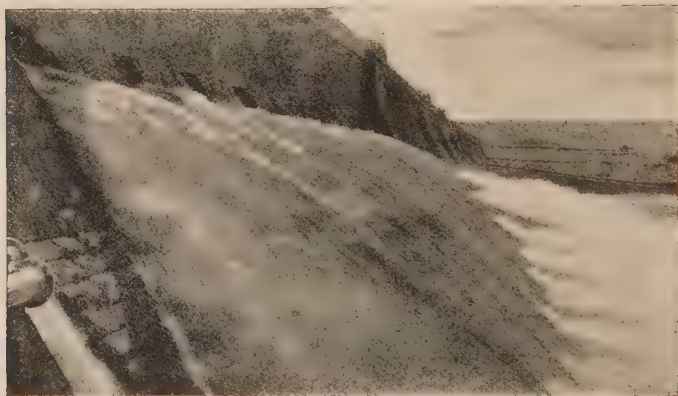
soldier, who had had much experience of the country and



The Gordon statue in Trafalgar Square

the people. When he got to the Soudan he thought that he could help to quiet the country by staying there for

a time instead of bringing out the Egyptian garrisons at once. For this purpose he wanted to have more men sent out from England; while the government had no wish to send our soldiers to the Soudan, and were only anxious for Gordon to fulfil his mission and come back at once. Finally he was besieged by the Mahdi's men in Khartoum, and as it was clear that he now could not get out, the government at last felt obliged to send a force to his rescue. But unhappily, through delay in starting and



The Aswan dam

(On the River Nile, letting out over 30,000 tons of water per minute)

through ignorance amongst the military authorities about the proper route, the force arrived too late. Khartoum had fallen, and General Gordon was dead.

This was a very sad mischance, which caused intense grief in England. But it did not add to the power of the Mahdi, whose influence quickly died away. For some years the difficulties between Egypt and the Soudan were left alone; and in the meantime much valuable work was done by Englishmen who

advised the government in Cairo. The improvement in the state of the Egyptian people since that time has been very remarkable. Great engineering works in the Nile valley have helped the peasants to get enough water for their crops, and railways enable them to move produce freely about. By British influence they have been protected from unjust taxation and from other kinds of tyranny. Schools and colleges have been set up, and, moreover, many Egyptians find their way to our universities to prepare for a profession. We may well hope for still greater progress in civilisation now that the last vestige of Turkish power is finally gone from Egypt, and that the British Protectorate proclaimed there in 1914 has been warmly welcomed by the nation.

For a good many years after 1883, however, our being in Egypt at all was thought by other European nations, especially by France, to be unnecessary and rather grasping. The French and British governments had not then the cordial understanding of one another which has grown up in the twentieth century, and France thought that as she had been in Egypt first, we ought not to have established ourselves so firmly there without her approval, and without any apparent intention of moving out again. This feeling had its effect on friendships and alliances in Europe. It happened that Russia, now under a new czar, was no longer inclined to be friendly with Germany and Austria, while, on the other hand, the suspicious feeling between the Russian and British governments had never died away since Crimean days. When, soon afterwards, Germany and Austria announced that Italy had joined them in what they called the Triple Alliance, it was natural in every way for Russia and France to draw closer together ;

and the fact that they both felt some distrust of Great Britain about Eastern affairs made another bond between them. It is not much wonder that this distrust was felt, for although our policy was honest, it did not always seem so to the rest of the world; and the idea of supporting the Turkish empire as much as we had done was almost certainly a mistake. This arrangement of the European nations went on for a good many years; France and Russia were friends, and so were Germany, Austria and Italy, while Great Britain had no powerful ally at all. The position is very different now, when we have a cordial friendship with many European powers.

Besides Egyptian affairs, there were other questions connected with Africa which brought Great Britain into a sort of rivalry with her neighbours. Until about 1884, no nation except our own and the Dutch had troubled about colonising the south of the African continent; but shortly afterwards the Prussian statesman Bismarck decided that his country ought to have a share in these new dominions, and a German protectorate was declared over one region on the west coast and another on the east.

This was the beginning of what has been called "the scramble for Africa." The danger to British possessions was that the Germans might push inland from their two stretches of coast, and, by meeting in the middle, block the way against any further progress northward from Cape Colony and British Bechuanaland. To guard against that, a number of Englishmen got together and formed what are called "chartered companies" to open up the country and establish British influence there. The great leader in this enterprise was Cecil Rhodes, who always declared as his aim that our power should run from "the Cape to Cairo." A good deal of progress was soon made

towards this, for one of the chartered companies occupied Matabeleland and Mashonaland, a second got hold of the region round Lake Nyasa, and a third the rich part of the country which is now called British East Africa. Later, still, the kingdom of Uganda came under our rule, after some fighting against a native king who had made a practice of cruelly murdering Christians. It was fairly certain after this that the "Cape to Cairo" dream would come true.

In western Africa, meanwhile, something of the same kind was going on, only that it was the French, not the Germans, with whom we came into contact. Until the last quarter of the century no European had tried to go far inland from the coast, because the climate was terribly unhealthy. Fevers of a very dangerous kind attacked most white men who stayed long in west Africa, and any expedition we sent inland did what they had to do and came back to the ports again. The French, however, who already had the colonies of Senegal and the Ivory coast, were prepared to risk the unhealthy climate, and push inland over a large territory which they called the French Soudan. To balance this we made an advance along the valley of the great river Niger, and brought the district called Nigeria under British influence. Both here and in the region of the Congo the boundaries between British and French possessions have been settled by agreement. Once, when a French soldier, Major Marchand, made a sudden advance to set up the French flag at a point on the Nile called Fashoda, there was even a fear that war might break out over it. Happily, however, the difficulty passed away, and a further agreement was reached with regard to our position of influence in the whole basin of the Nile.

That incident came in the middle of another period of effort in the Soudan. For eleven years after the death of Gordon this great empty country had been left to the Arab tribes which had then become masters of it. But as Egypt prospered, and our possessions in east and central Africa were pushed nearer and nearer to the Nile, great difficulty was felt in having a wild and uncivilised country in between to block the way. Moreover, the "Khalifa," or prince, in power there, was constantly threatening an attack on Egypt with the same fierce wild soldiery who had besieged Khartoum. At last it was thought necessary to conquer the Soudan, and an Egyptian army was led against the Khalifa by Sir Herbert Kitchener, afterwards well known to us all as Lord Kitchener. He had trained the natives of Egypt into good troops, and with the help of a British force a complete victory was won at the battle of Omdurman. The same sort of work was now begun in the Soudan which had for many years been going on in Egypt.

At about the same time as the battle of Omdurman there appeared the first grave sign of new trouble in the Transvaal. Since the grant of independence to the Boers in 1881, it had looked for a while as if the two colonising races in South Africa, Dutch and British, were going to settle down peacefully as neighbours. But a fresh cause of disturbance was the discovery of rich gold mines near the town of Johannesburg in the Transvaal. Thousands of Britishers hurried to this district and settled there, while the Boers as a whole preferred to remain on their farms in other parts of the country. The settlers in the mining districts were called "Uitlanders," and were looked upon with a good deal of disapproval by the government of the Transvaal. It happened that the

men in power there, and especially the president, Kruger, were very much opposed to letting new settlers have any share in managing the affairs of the country. Miners were allowed to settle in the gold district and to make Johannesburg a large town ; moreover, heavy taxes were collected from them, for they were rich as well as numerous. But, nevertheless, they were not given the same rights of voting as the Boers, and difficulties were constantly thrown in the way of their industry and the development of the mines.

This treatment was extremely irritating to the settlers on the "Rand," as it was called, and the British government frequently pointed out to President Kruger that he was not keeping the promise of 1881, and that especially since the Uitlanders had grown into a majority, they ought to have more power. But the whole matter was made infinitely more difficult by the foolish action of some of the leading men in Cecil Rhodes's chartered company, who arranged that the discontented Johannesburg people were to rise in rebellion, while at the same time an armed force was to march over the border into the Transvaal. This expedition, remembered as "Jameson's Raid," was a failure. The Boers, always excellent soldiers, easily defeated the weak body of troops led into their country by Dr Jameson, and the British government was naturally angry that such a splendid excuse should have been given to President Kruger for behaving worse than he had done before. In fact, it was the sort of case in which everybody behaved stupidly. The German emperor, who had no real concern in the matter at all, chose to step in also ; he sent a telegram to Kruger, congratulating him on having repelled the Raid "without appealing to the help of friendly Powers." As this was taken by our

people as a hint that the emperor would have been glad to help, and was also thought a quite unnecessary interference, a good deal of natural anger was aroused.

The state of feeling in the Transvaal grew worse and worse. Sir Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner, pressed in vain for some change to be made ; and at last, in the spring of 1899, he telegraphed to Mr Chamberlain—who was then Secretary for the Colonies—that “ the spectacle of thousands of British subjects kept permanently in the position of helots ”—or slaves—was ruining the influence of our government all through South Africa. During the summer of that year efforts were made to reach some understanding ; but statesmen on both sides saw that it must come to war, and in October the struggle began.

The British government made the mistake of thinking that it would be an easy matter to defeat the Boers, whereas it turned out to be extremely difficult. They were brave and skilful fighters ; their government had been getting ready and collecting arms for several years ; and they had, of course, the advantage of being thoroughly used to the South African country, which is a difficult one to fight in. On the other hand, the Transvaal leaders did not in the least understand how great the power of the British empire is, or they would have seen the uselessness of going to war at all. The older men amongst them were both ignorant and prejudiced, and believed that our country could not put a really strong army into the field. There was a party which knew better than this, and which was also inclined to think that the Rand settlers ought to be treated differently. But when war had actually begun, these younger men were as determined as any to support the president and fight for their own side. During the



Ladysmith

first few months they achieved remarkable success. The British general was trying to hold the exposed northern part of Natal against stronger forces of Transvaal and Orange Free State Boers combined. He had to fall back, and after a defeat was shut up with his men in Ladysmith at the beginning of November. New forces were sent out from home under well-known leaders, but for some time they failed consistently. One general on the western side tried to reach Kimberley and relieve it; he was defeated at Magersfontein. Another, while marching towards the Orange Free State, was beaten back with heavy loss. A third, then the commander-in-chief, suffered a severe reverse at Colenso while trying to cross a river on the eastern side and get into Natal to raise the siege of Ladysmith.

All these mishaps became known in England within a few days, during what was called afterwards the "black week" of December 1899. Everybody now understood that the South African war was a much more serious business than had been supposed. "It is our title to be known as a world-Power which is now on trial," said Mr Asquith in a speech at Newcastle, expressing what most of the nation felt; and the government meanwhile took strong measures to retrieve our failures. Lord Roberts went out to take the chief command, while Lord Kitchener was summoned from the Soudan to be his chief of staff. Most of our regular army was despatched to South Africa, along with volunteers from home and well-equipped troops offered by our colonies. In spite of the fact that another defeat was suffered meanwhile near Ladysmith, Roberts began his operations on the western side of the country. After a quick sweeping movement by cavalry under General French, the siege of Kimberley was raised;

very soon afterwards the Boer force in those parts was surrounded and had to surrender. Roberts then advanced rapidly towards Bloemfontein, and so on to Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal. Soon after this place had been occupied, the main Transvaal army under General Botha was defeated after a hard-fought battle at Diamond Hill. As both Ladysmith and Mafeking, another besieged town in the north of the Transvaal, had been relieved in the meanwhile, the chief operations of the war were over, and both the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were declared to belong to the British Empire. But for a year and a half after this, Kitchener and other generals were kept busy in the pursuit of small forces of the enemy, forces which it was extraordinarily difficult to catch or bring to battle.

At the time of the South African war there was some difference of opinion in this country as to its justice and wisdom. The best proof, however, that our action was by no means an injury to the Boers is to be found in the state of South Africa to-day. Within a few years from the conclusion of the war the different colonies came together in one Union, and the difference of race between Dutch and British is likely to be soon entirely forgotten in a common pride of country. The South African Union has full rights to govern itself; and its leaders feel, what many of the Boers guessed before, that it is a fine thing to be a part of the British Empire. Our country has every reason to be proud of the fact that General Botha, who in 1900 was one of our most determined and skilful opponents, in 1914 was prompt to lead his forces against the Germans as the common enemy of us all in South Africa and in Europe.

By the time that this grant of self-government was

made to the new South African colonies—or, at any rate, by the time that it had been proved a success—almost all responsible men had come to hold much the same views about our empire, and to feel the same sort of pride in it. For some years before that there had been differences of opinion, some people being inclined to think that the growth of our power in all parts of the world was the best thing that could happen, others believing that we had gone quite far enough already. One of the men who had a great deal to do with nursing a new spirit of “Imperialism” was Joseph Chamberlain. He worked especially hard to bring about warmer relations between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies, while other speakers and writers did much to rouse our national pride in the good work done amongst coloured races—“the white man’s burden,” as that duty has been called.

XII. GREAT BRITAIN SINCE THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

WITH the beginning of the twentieth century we come very near to the period of changes which are still spoken of as recent events, and which have produced the general state of affairs we see in our country to-day. The long reign of Queen Victoria came to an end early in 1901, when she died and was succeeded by Edward the Seventh, the father of our present king, George V.; and this helped to suggest that old days were over and something else was at hand. But it was more in foreign than in home affairs that new movements began almost exactly with the turn of the century. Changes concerned with what we have called

the growth of democracy were delayed for some years longer, while the chief of those due to scientific discoveries did not take place till about the same time. So, in dealing very briefly with the history of this period we shall notice several beginnings, and understand that the working out of what has been begun lies chiefly in the future

Relations with France and Germany

The Boer war taught our nation a good deal, and amongst other things it drew attention to the fact that we stood almost without a cordial friend amongst the governments of Europe. Even the people themselves of most foreign countries showed a good deal of enmity at this time; they knew little of our side of the dispute, and thought that we were almost entirely in the wrong. It has even been supposed that but for the overpowering strength of our navy a league might have been formed on the Continent simply in order to attack us while the struggle in South Africa was going on.

Within a year or two afterwards, however, this was happily changed, and we had made a firm friendship with France. Many people say that it came about largely through the influence of King Edward himself. He understood the French very well, having passed a good deal of his time in Paris; and people of all classes there were as fond of him as he was of them. But there were other reasons why the two governments and nations should draw together. One was that France was now beginning to interest herself in Morocco, in somewhat the same way that we had done in Egypt. It seemed a fair arrangement that if they recognised our position in the one country we

should recognise theirs in the other ; and this was what, by the year 1904, had been agreed upon. Other less



Edward VII

important arrangements were made at the same time, and the new friendship, which was called *L'Entente*

Cordiale, was popular in both countries. Soon afterwards the French fleet paid a visit to Spithead, and was warmly welcomed and feasted there. Times were indeed changed since, just a hundred years before, the victory of Trafalgar saved us from the threat of Napoleon's invasion. But perhaps, as many people said, it was because both nations had fought well in the many wars between Britain and France that they were now ready to be firm friends and allies.

Our relations with Germany, meantime, were felt to be rather different. The British government was eager to keep on good terms, and possibly the German emperor himself wished at that time for the same thing. But there must have been a strong party amongst his advisers, most of whom were military men, always urging that when the right time came war ought to be made upon this country. The German army was enormously big, well trained and splendidly equipped; and its officers no doubt felt that unless fighting took place some time, their work would have been wasted. In England we did not know or care very much about this state of mind; but the striking fact which could not be overlooked was that Germany meant to have not only a great army but a strong navy.

The German government had begun, since the last year or two of the nineteenth century, to build many more battleships than they had ever thought necessary before, and to arm them with the most powerful guns that their armament-makers could turn out. The cost of doing this was enormous, and involved laying very heavy taxes on the people, so it appeared hardly likely that it would have been done without some strong reason. Germany's position as a power upon the sea is quite different from

our own. Owing to the facts that we live upon an island, are a great manufacturing and trading people and have an empire extending all over the world, it is clearly necessary for us to have a great navy; otherwise we might be attacked at a hundred different points, or even starved by the stoppage of supplies coming to Great Britain. But Germany could not have felt any such necessity, for she had few colonies and a very small sea-coast, being almost in the centre of Europe. Many people felt convinced that the new German navy was meant to increase until it could beat ours; although, since we started a long way ahead, and went on building ships as fast as Germany was doing, or even faster, it was not likely that that would soon be the case. Once, however, our government did try the effect of pausing in this race to see if Germany would do the same. Perhaps, it was thought, the Germans supposed us to intend an attack upon them in the future, and if we showed our peaceful intentions by checking the increase of our navy, they might do the same. They did not, however, but went on with their battleships, and declared, as they had done from the beginning, that nothing was intended except to protect German interests if ever they were in danger.

The fact, indeed, was that Germany, having grown rich and powerful, felt a strong desire for new possessions outside Europe, in addition to the comparatively few she had already. But the difficulty lay in finding any more that were really worth having. The British race, having begun its empire-making hundreds of years before, had occupied all the best parts of the world. We can easily understand that to an ambitious people like the Prussians this seemed difficult to be borne, especially since they made the mistake of supposing that our empire was

managed badly. Ever since Germany had seized the Chinese post of Kiao-Chau in 1897, different incidents had shown what the wishes of her government were. The emperor had made several public speeches containing strong hints as to German expansion, and for years the question about French rights in Morocco had caused difficulty and threatened trouble. As early as 1905, it was known that Germany objected to the agreement made about Morocco, and, in 1911, a further dispute on the same subject brought us very near to war. That time the German government drew back; but it was clear to the French, even more than to us, that danger was threatening. They themselves wanted nothing but peace, but they were gradually coming to think that they ought to make ready for war.

In the meantime the Russian government also was turning its attention to the defence of the country. A few years before, in an unfortunate war against Japan, the management of the army had been shown to be very bad, and since then the behaviour of Germany and Austria had grown more and more overbearing. It is probable that their military advisers wished to provoke a war before the Russians grew too strong.

Home Affairs

Most people in Great Britain had very little knowledge of the troubles which were gathering up abroad during the ten or twelve years after the close of the Boer war. They found, moreover, a good many interesting things to occupy them at home.

Old men and women whose memories go a long way

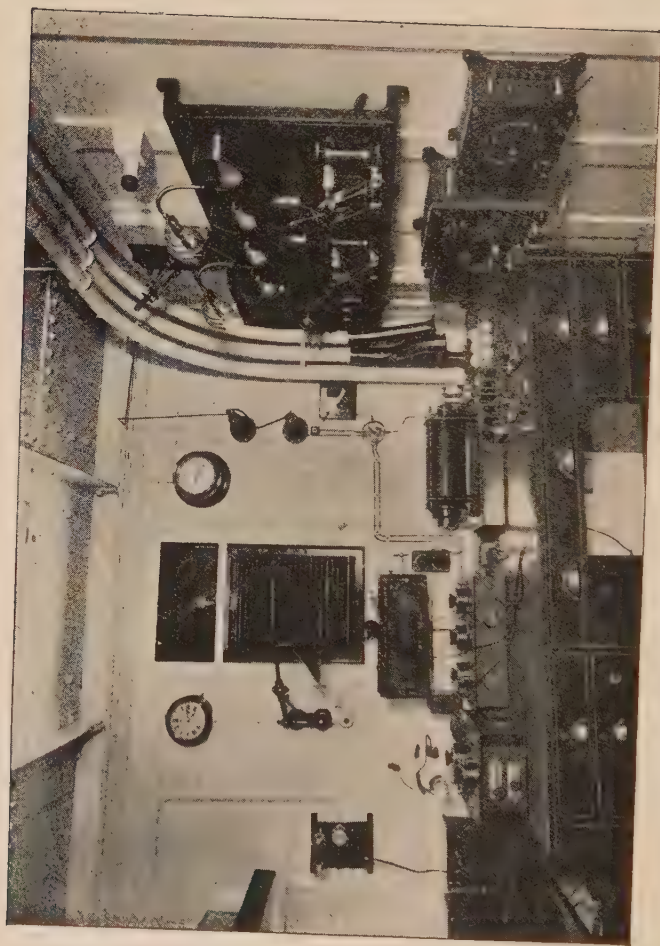
back sometimes remark how much more the appearance of our big towns has altered in the last twelve or fourteen years than in the thirty or forty before that. If this is so the change is almost entirely due to one great power, electricity, and to certain discoveries as to ways of applying it. The motor-car was, indeed, an invention of the latter years of the nineteenth century, but it was not introduced into England until some time after it had been tried abroad. In the year 1899 the carts, carriages and omnibuses of London and other towns were drawn by horses, and only trains drawn by steam power ran on the underground railways, with the result that the air in them was almost stifling. Instead of the hoot and roar of the motor-omnibus and the taxi-cab the familiar noises of the streets were the trampling of horses' feet and the grinding of wheels. Everything moved so much more slowly that a bicyclist could easily pass ahead of the traffic anywhere. There was no smell of petrol and much less smell of tar ; but the fumes which came out of a Metropolitan railway station were quite as bad when you had to meet them.

It was underground that the first change came, when the " twopenny tube " was opened in the year 1900. Its speed and cleanliness attracted people at once, and the system spread very quickly. Private motor-cars began about the same time to be seen here and there, both in town and country ; but as they grew more frequent, they also grew more unpopular amongst everybody except the users of them, on account of their noise, their dust and the recklessness with which they were driven. It was not until 1909 that motor cabs and omnibuses appeared in any numbers, but after that, improvements both in roads and machinery became even more necessary, and so were made before long. Noise and dust were lessened, and the danger

of being run over is not very serious when people are thoroughly accustomed to a new kind of traffic.

An even more wonderful event of the twentieth century is what has been called "the conquest of the air." If there was one thing which most people had felt certain could never be done, it was the making of a really serviceable flying-machine. Solitary inventors of all periods had longed to succeed in it, but had never got very much beyond the helpless balloon. Now, flying-machines of all sorts began to come into existence at a most extraordinary speed. In 1906 and 1907 a few men were known to be making trials with aeroplanes. In 1909 a French air-man flew across the Channel in safety; the same autumn saw the first successful flight in a high wind, and the first English aviation meeting. Another wonderful invention, perfected a few years earlier, should perhaps be included in the conquest of the air. This was wireless telegraphy, by which messages can be sent long distances through the air to be received by an instrument prepared for that purpose. Telephones, which were an invention of thirty years earlier, still seemed amazing enough to the ordinary person, but wireless telegraphy was stranger still. Everybody soon realised how important these new inventions would be in case of war. Aeroplanes and air-ships could rise above an army or cross into an enemy's country; by wireless telegraphy ships could summon one another from great distances across the sea.

So far as the daily life of ordinary people is concerned, the increase of speed and of convenience is the chief difference which modern discoveries have made. We can go very quickly in or out of town by an electric tram or a motor-bus; we can buy or sell things in a minute or two by using a telephone. Our streets, public buildings



The wireless telegraphy apparatus in the operating room of a Marconi ship

and a good many of our houses are lighted by electricity, which is clean, does not vitiate the air, and saves a great deal of trouble. It is in such ways as these that conditions of life have altered since the latter part of the nineteenth century; otherwise they are very much what they were. We live in the same sort of houses, although the poorer ones are being slowly improved; while changes of dress since the days of the crinoline, between 1860 and 1870, have not been much more than changes of fashion. The lives of some classes of people have, perhaps, been affected quite as much by new laws as by new inventions. The eight years before 1914 saw various measures passed which dealt with the affairs of working-men, women and children, and represented something of what men and women thought should be done to improve them.

In the summer of 1914 an Austrian prince was assassinated by a student of Serbian nationality, and this act, with its consequences, let loose, one by one, all the different forces which were threatening the peace of Europe.

For a long time the aim of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had been to increase its power in the Balkan peninsula, and to some extent it had done so without anybody feeling able to interfere. But this could not go on without causing uneasiness to Russia, since her population and that of some of the Balkan countries were of the same Slav race, and there was great sympathy between them. So far, the Russian government had not stepped in, because Germany was always ready to support Austria with the threat of war, and it was only under very great provocation

that Russia could wish to enter upon such a struggle. But the treatment of Serbia by Austria after this disastrous murder went beyond anything which had happened before. The government at Vienna demanded that the Serbians should allow such interference in their affairs that they would practically cease to be independent at all. Serbia declared herself ready to yield a great deal of what was asked, especially with regard to the punishment of the conspirators; but she refused to give up the control of her own affairs. The Austrian government then declared that it would send an army and force this little nation to do what was asked.

In the meantime, other powers were being drawn into the dispute, and our own government was looking on with grave concern. Germany was believed to be encouraging Austria in everything she did, while it was almost certain that Russia would stand by Serbia. So far, that would be a struggle between the two great races of central and eastern Europe, the Teutonic or German, and the Slav. But France was so closely allied to Russia that if war began it was certain that she would take part also. The British government worked hard to keep peace. Our foreign minister, Sir Edward Grey, offered every possible suggestion and help; but these, and especially his proposal for a meeting and general discussion in London, were refused by Germany. Much has since then become known to show that the German government thought this the best opportunity for waging war in its own interest. The discussions between the different powers were seen to be useless and by August 2nd Germany and Austria on the one side, Russia and France on the other, were declared to be in a state of war.

For a time it seemed uncertain whether our own country

would be involved in this terrible struggle. Germany had tried to induce our government to stand aside by



King George V

promising not to attack us, and also not to take away from France any territory in Europe, although her colonies

in case of defeat were to fall to Germany. But Sir Edward Grey refused any such agreement, declaring that "it would be a disgrace for us to make this bargain with Germany at the expense of France, a disgrace from which the good name of this country would never recover." We did not declare war until Germany committed the dishonourable act of sending troops into Belgium. The European powers, Germany among the rest, had promised solemnly that this should never be done ; the little Belgian nation was always to be neutral, whoever might be at war. But Germany saw the great advantage of invading France through Belgium, and to gain it she broke her pledged word and sacrificed her honour. On the morning of August 5th our people knew that war with Germany had begun.

The War 1914-1919

The history of the next four years is virtually the history of the war thus begun.

At the outset the German armies pressed through Belgium, and the weight of their massed attack forced back the French and the small British Expeditionary Force which had been sent to support them. The tide was turned at the Marne, in September, when

"the empire of blood and iron rolled slowly back towards the darkness of the northern forests ; and the great nations of the West went forward ; where, side by side, as after a long lovers' quarrel, went the ensigns of St Denis and St George."

Later in the year the British were engaged in a desperate defence of the city of Ypres, and of the roads leading to the Channel ports. The position was eventually held against overwhelming numbers and a defensive line established from the North Sea to Switzerland.

Before the end of the year the British Navy had made

its power felt. German ships were swept off the seas and the blockade had begun its slow, but deadly, work. On the other hand, the Germans had found an ally in the Turks.

The year 1915 was marked by the unsuccessful, but heroic, Gallipoli expedition, by the entrance of Italy into the war on the side of the allies, by the difficulty of making any effective advance on the Western front, and by the development of air warfare, the first Zeppelin attack on England being made in January.

Germany's reply to the blockade was a policy of using her submarines to sink merchant-ships, without warning, whether they carried munitions of war or not. The loss of the *Lusitania* in this way roused bitter feeling in the United States, but it was not until 1917 that they declared war on Germany.

The great naval engagement known as the battle of Jutland took place on 31 May, 1916. The German fleet did not again leave its harbours until, with the white flag at its mast-heads, it steamed towards the Firth of Forth in November 1918.

The year 1916 was a bad one for our armies in the East, the garrison of Kut, in Mesopotamia, being forced to surrender. In the west the French held Verdun against all attacks, and in July the British began the great battle of the Somme.

In the next year the fortunes of the British armies in the East were greatly improved. Bagdad was taken in the spring and Jerusalem occupied at the end of the year. In France and Flanders the steady pressure of the British forces won several important positions, such as the ridges of Vimy, Messines, and Passchendaele.

Politically, the most important events of 1917 were the collapse of Russia and the entrance of the United States

into the war. It was in the spring of 1918 that the German army made its final effort in the West and, by sheer weight of attack, drove back the British and occupied towns where Germans had not been seen since 1914.

But, as always, the British soldier stood the test when his back was to the wall. Troops were hastened from England and the United States, and the rush was stayed.

Not many months later the tables were completely turned. The armies of Britain and France co-operated in an advancing movement which quickly became a series of triumphant victories. Morally and materially the enemy was routed. On 11 November, 1918, an armistice, based on complete surrender, was signed. The Peace Conference was held at Paris and the Treaty of Versailles was formally completed on 28 June, 1919.

The people of Britain learned many things from the war: they learned, for instance, that a modern European war is not an affair of small professional armies, but rather of all able-bodied citizens; that it is not an affair for men only, but that women, too, have their part to play; that the tie between the mother country and the dominions is not merely one of sentiment; that while the sure shield of the Navy keeps the shores of Britain immune from attack and safely convoys the merchant-ships that carry the necessities of life, a bomb from an enemy aeroplane may fall on the islander and the non-combatant; that modern science, while it makes for the greater comfort of the sick and wounded in war, tends to make war itself more terrible than before.

Nearly all men are now agreed that an efficient League of Nations would be the finest means of preventing future wars; how to secure its efficiency is the problem of the future.



